

THE QUIVER

Saturday, February 9, 1867.



(Drawn by A. THOMPSON.)

"There used to be a little prattling fellow come to sit upon my bed."—p. 324.

LEARNING RELIANCE.

A WORKING MAN'S STORY.

ALWAYS use copper nails, we do, for fastening slates on a roof. Iron would rust, and be soon eaten through; and next time you see a bad fire, and the roof-slates are cracking and flying off,

you'll see those copper nails burn for all the world like beautiful bright blue stars as they fall to the ground. Mind, I don't mean to say that if you put a copper nail in a fire it will burn; but if

it's at the top of a blazing house, in the intense heat it will go fast enough.

Curious ideas people has, to be sure, about roofing houses, just as they have about roofing their heads. Out in Switzerland, they tell me that they use wood slabs held down with blocks of stone; in Jamaiky, again, it's wood shingles laid on. Some parts of the country—and London too—tiles is all the go; while down in Surrey, and all about Godstone, they use thin pieces of stone, rough and clumsy, to be sure, but, somehow, looking nice and old-fashioned and homely, covered as they are with bits of grey, yellow, and green moss. But, of course, after all said and done, though a bit of sheet lead may be all right in a gutter, there's nothing like slate—thin, well-squared pieces of slate. Now, here we are you see, this is how I trims them. Here's a block with an iron standing up out of it to square the slate on, and here's this half-chopper, half-knife sort of a thing, with a spike at the back like an old soldier's halberd; and here we go, chip-chip-chop, and all's square; tip-tip-tap, and there's a couple of nail-holes through, ready for fixing upon the next roof I'm on; and so we go on all day.

Dangerous jobs? Well, yes, I suppose they are sometimes, for we're up a good height on sloping roofs; but then, you see, use is everything, and when a man knows it's his daily task for to get the bread for those at home, and when he can call to mind that it says somewhere "as the very hairs of your head are all numbered," it gets natural to him to put his trust in God, and go about his work as a matter of course. Why, if we scaffold and ladder climbers hadn't a sort of comfortable feeling that we were as safe up aloft as anywhere, what would become of your fine buildings, and towers, and spires? Where would your sailors and workmen be as are always either out upon the great deep, or working with machinery that makes some men shudder when they go amongst it?

Well, perhaps I wasn't always a man of religious feeling; but you see we've had a good deal of trouble at home—trouble such as would make any one thoughtful, and teach him what a short step it is between here and hereafter. Some men are always grumbling and complaining about their large families, and the cost; while we two at home always go on the other tack, and fidget and wonder about our one, and whether it may not yet be taken away.

Five times over there's been the long-looked for little one, that we seemed almost to hunger for; then, day by day, you could watch it grow and love to stretch its little pink limbs, and catch at things with the tiny hands; there were the little eyes growing brighter and brighter, so that you might watch the sense, as it were, gradually coming, and the first dawning of a smile playing about the little

lips, till the senses grew keener and keener, and the sparkling eye told you that you were seen and known. Five times over there was a sunny-haired little one for us both to be foolishly proud on, and then came the dark, shadowy night when it went to sleep; while each time as the wife took a tiny lock of soft hair—the only token we could keep in remembrance—she hung upon me, sobbing, till we went and read where it says, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

Years and years had passed over us, and I seemed to be growing into a bitter disappointed man. There was another little one, but I was morose, and tried to make myself believe as I did not care for it, saying that it would only be taken away; and yet all the time I knew how stupid I was making of myself; for every time the tiny soft thing was put close up to my face, or lay nestling and cooing in my arms, I could feel that sense of love and paternity that has been planted by God in the breast of the roughest man that ever lived upon this earth.

But, for all that, I kept on taking but little notice, and being bitter and harsh as could be; and I believe I should have kept so if it hadn't been for two things as seemed to change me. You see, they would not seem important things to other people, but they made a wonderful impression on me—giving me a sort of trust and reliance in all things being for the best; while what we have to do is our duty, as far as the power lies in us, and leave the rest to One above.

I'd gone to work one day very much out of sorts as to my temper; while I don't mind saying that it was about something so trifling, and of such small consequence, that I don't even know now what it was. My job that day was repairing the roof of a house, putting in a new slate here and there where they were cracked, so as to make all good again. Perhaps you've seen how we have a ladder up to the roof, and then lay another short one from that up the slope, and tie it firmly on, so that one can easily work right up to the ridge.

Well, I was working right up at the ridge, and then farther along, right away from the ladder, now here, and now there, just where I could see it was wanted, and not being particular if I cracked another slate or two in getting along. It was a large roof, with a very long slope towards the street, while the house was four storeys to the top, so that you see it was a good height; while for any one who fell, there was the chance of his pitching either on to the area railings, or else right down into the area, a dozen feet lower. But I was so used to that sort of work, that I never thought about falling, and sat close up to the ridge there, taking it very coolly, finishing tapping on a bit of slate, when I drew my feet up under me, and was just going to turn; but all at once I began to slide gently down the slates,

the iron nails in my boots gliding easily over the smooth roof, and the rate gradually getting faster.

I did not think anything of it at the first moment; then it seemed time to stop myself; and then I put one hand down. But that was of no use, so I put down the other quickly; but that was of no use; and then feeling just a little startled, I thrust out my feet from under me, and tried to dig my heels in. But that had no effect; for once well started, I found that I was going faster and faster down the slope; and even when I threw myself right back, and tried to grasp something with my fingers, it made no difference, for I seemed to be gliding slowly and surely off, without a chance of stopping.

It only took a few moments altogether; but thoughts go quicker than moments, and I had plenty of time to see how I was to blame for not having the ladder moved, and how surely there was death before me. Only a few seconds before, strong, hearty, and without a thought of going wrong; while now it seemed that nothing could save me, and I must shoot off the roof and be dashed to pieces.

Think! yes; I could think fast enough, as, gliding along faster than I did, my hammer slipped over the slates, and I heard it rattle down; while, if I had only kept it in my hand, I might have dashed it through the roof, and so formed a stay. I knew well enough what there was at the edge—only the projecting eave, with a light iron gutter under it—nothing that could save me; and there I glided down, helpless and hopeless, trying to say a scrap of a prayer; and then, so completely unnerved, that I shrieked aloud as I called on God to help me.

Nothing hardly short of a miracle seemed likely to save me, as I lay back, sliding down, with my hands pressing the slates, and my wild, staring eyes looking straight up at the blue sky; when all at once I felt something give my clothes a jerk and stop me a little; but the hope was stifled the next moment, for I went on slowly, nearer and nearer, drawing my legs up as I did so; and then, when I felt that all must be over, I stopped short with my heels resting in the frail, thin iron gutter, supported on a few hooks; while I lay there, not daring to move, till my labourer, coming up with some more slates, saw how I was fixed, and got help to move the ladders, and at last brought them close up to me, so that I could get firm hold of one of the rungs, when, for the first time, my heart revived, and I burst into a fit of weak crying.

I couldn't work any more that day, for it was as though I was always sliding down that horrible roof, nearer and nearer every moment to the time when I should shoot off; or else I could feel myself lying on my back, with my heels just resting half an inch in the gutter, which quivered

under my weight, as I lay afraid to move, and expecting that every moment would be my last. And another thing seemed to be working on me; and that was a desire for it to be night and darkness, that I might get away out of sight, and try, in my ignorant, blind way, to offer up thanks for my prayer being heard; while all the time with shame I could not but feel how unworthy I was, while plenty of men I knew had been carried off to the hospital.

The wife did not say anything to me; but she seemed to fancy as there was something wrong; but she did not ask, and I could not bear to talk of it at all, and it was some time after before she knew; for I did not tell her till the night when I was knocked down by the horses, and that was perhaps a month after, when the thoughts of my accident had almost passed away, and I was going on about as usual—not leading a rough life, but a careless, indifferent one, thinking a deal more about the public-house than home, and taking but little heed to how miserable it made our little place.

But there was a reminder came, one which stretched me on a weary, tossing bed of sickness, so that I woke one day to look longingly out of the open window at the bright blue sky, and to think how delightful it would be to be far out in the country beneath some soft waving tree, looking at the checkered sunbeams glancing through; and murmuring in my heart that I should be a poor man lying stretched on a bed of pain with a crushed collar-bone.

It was quite evening as I lay there watching till the silvery clouds turned golden, then red, and then paled away, and first one and then another star peeped out, till the heavens grew bright with the sparkling clusters; and then a better spirit seemed to come over me, and as I lay there, unable to move in the calm of that still, summer night, if ever man did, truly and from his heart, I thanked God that things were as they were. Then my cheeks seemed to flush up again as I thought of it all: about my coming home that evening, and two of our worst chaps with me, and of the struggle I had to get away from them, as they tried hard to persuade me to stay and drink. How they sneered and called after me, as something seemed to drag me homewards, and I hurried off and turned down next street, half vexed and angry that I had not stopped to have just half a pint; and then thinking again how that the money paid for that half pint would have led to paying for many more, so that I should have been unfit for work the next day. And so I jogged on, with the good and the bad battling in my heart, till I turned into our street, and was sauntering along, when all at once from behind came a noise of shouting and hallooing, mixed up with the rattling of horses' hoofs and the rolling of wheels; then I saw that a pair of horses were

galloping away with a van, and the man driving had no command over them; while, before I had time to more than get in a doorway, there came a terrible crash, and I saw that the horses had run a wheel against a lamp-post, broken it, smashed the van, and then, getting loose with the splinter-bar and a bit of the broken van, they came tearing and kicking down the street. They were a good fifty yards off me, and yet, when, looking round to see if the street were clear, my blood seemed all to rush to my heart, and a faintness seized me, for, toddling along ahead, there was a little child right in the middle of the road; and then what followed all seems confusion, mixed up amongst which is the shouts of the people and the shrieks of women. But I can remember darting into the road and catching up the poor child, and almost throwing it into the arms of a woman running out of a house, as something seemed to strike me on the shoulder, and I

was hurled to the ground stunned, where I seemed to be half asleep, and not to be disturbed, while people were talking over me in whispers.

And as I lay there, day after day, watched and cared for most tenderly, I thought more and more of both accidents, and how little I was injured; while as I grew better there used to be a little prattling fellow come to sit upon my bed for me to watch his bright blue eyes, and the sun shining through his golden curls—the little fellow who, but for my hurrying home that night, would no doubt have been killed; and then I used to feel a sort of swelling in my throat, and a proud smile come upon my face as I compared my hurt with the saving of his life; and then once more would come the sense of thankfulness to God, mingled with prayers for strength of mind as well as body, for the little fellow I saved was my own child.

RUTH

BY THE REV. JOSEPH M'CORMICK, M.A.

FROM MOAB TO BETHLEHEM.



NAOMI, in her misery, determined to return to God's land and God's people; but, as is the case when the heart is set upon doing right, she had some difficulties to surmount ere she could carry out her resolution. There were her sons' widows; what should she do with them? She could not forget that they were her relatives, and she had, doubtless, learned to love them. She must tear herself away from them. It was out of the question to ask them to accompany her on a long and difficult journey, especially as she had no immediate prospect of such advantage as she could wish to offer them, at its end. They must be left in Moab. Summoning them to her side, she took them some little distance from their homes, and then said to them—

"Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant that ye may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband."

Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said: "We will return with thee unto thy people."

There is no doubt they liked Naomi. That they should, even for a moment, entertain the thought of forsaking their home to go with her, is a clear proof of this. Their impulsive offer became kind-hearted, amiable women as they were. But Naomi, though their companionship on her long journey would have been both welcome and advantageous, would not, like a wise

woman, allow them to act on a hastily-formed resolution, lest they should reproach her if misfortune befell them. She was, indeed, bound for God's land and God's people—that thought would have been enough for the Spirit-born; but she would remind them of what they were leaving. She turned their eyes towards their homes, their relatives, and their earthly pleasures and goods. There was a struggle—a great struggle; some thought; more embracings; more tears. To one of them, Orpah, Naomi was lovely, but the men and women of Moab were lovelier; Naomi's God was good, but the gods of her fathers were more to be desired. As far as she was concerned, the matter was settled. The turning-point of life, which comes sooner or later to every one, was passed. A few more tears; another embrace; and back she went to the things which perish;—back to the pleasures of sin, which last only for a season;—back to the idolatries which bring destruction. Soon she settled down in a "far country"—a country far away from God—having been offered a lot amongst the blessed, which she had refused; and there, with double guilt upon her head, and tempting Jehovah to destroy her, we must leave her. As far as we know, she never came to Bethlehem: as far as we can tell, we shall not meet her in heaven.

Naomi dealt with her as Christ does with the worldly. He plainly shows that great self-sacrifices are required of them. He goes so far as to say that houses, goods, friends, even life must, if necessary, be forsaken. Alas! in too many cases the pleasures, gains, and ambition of this world,

short as they are, are too attractive for them: they choose them in preference to the burden of Christ's cross, though it is light and is allied with present rest and eternal glory. They take up their abode with Orpah in some Moab.

The other daughter-in-law looked where Naomi bade her—on all the advantages of her own land. There were charms about them, but as she gazed, new and brighter visions started up before her. The hills of Moab were eclipsed by those of God's land; her village was surpassed by Bethlehem; her old companions were not to be compared with sweet and holy Naomi; the gods of her fathers were only wood and stone; and she beheld, rising over a new and happy home, with healing in His wings, a perfect Being, full of love, and wisdom, and power. Oh! to know Him, to be with His people, to have the ministrations of His servants, this would be blessed! She felt a gentle force—the motions of God's good Spirit—impelling her to cast in her lot with Naomi, and she yielded to that holy violence. Her resolution was made. In vain did Naomi point her to the retreating figure of her sister; in vain did she remind her of Moab and its false gods. She once and for ever silenced her, respectfully and firmly, in the most touching and eloquent language: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Noble, blessed Ruth, for that was her name! Naomi offered thee no home; thou shalt yet have a happy one. Naomi promised thee no husband, and, consequently no children; thou shalt be the wife of a God-fearing and affectionate man, and the great-grandmother of the renowned David, King of Israel, a type of the Messiah, his offspring. Naomi could not give thee a share of earthly goods; but thou shalt be rich and prosperous. Naomi has ministered to thee spiritual blessings, and thou shalt show her thy gratitude by supplying her temporal needs, alleviating her sorrows, and smoothing her pillow in old age and death. Naomi and thou wilt find a better resting-place and home than Bethlehem, even the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the holy and the blessed, the seat of wisdom and love, of plenty and costly treasure, the abode of the one glorious God and David's Lord and Son, the gracious and faithful Messiah. May I through your faith and the same Saviour meet you both there!

Contrasted with Elimelech's distrust of God in going to Moab, how beautifully did Ruth's faith shine forth as she cast in her lot with poor and pious Naomi! For Naomi, her people, and her God, she forsook everything that was dear to her upon

earth. My dear reader, imitate her. Cast in thy lot with the people of God. Lose the whole world rather than thine own soul. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Do not dread the future. Poverty and distress shall not be thy portion. Have faith in God. Remember the words of One who cannot lie, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Say, then, to Christ, as Ruth said to Naomi: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

It was in early spring that Ruth and Naomi, after the dangers and fatigue of a long journey, came in sight of the small and picturesque village of Bethlehem. To the one, though time had caused some changes, the scene was familiar; to the other it was new. Naomi's desires were about to be realised. She might often have said—

"I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return, and die at home at last."

The past, doubtless, came now vividly before her—her happy childhood, her attachment to and marriage with Elimelech, the first years of bliss that union had afforded, the famine, the impolitic and improper migration to Moab, the calamities which befell her there, her losses and her trials. She knew that her beauty had faded; that the joyousness for which she had been famous was gone; and that she was now a poverty-stricken widow, bowing down towards the grave. The future, also, was contemplated. How would she be received by her old friends? Would they despise her? Would they remind her of her foolish conduct? Well, what matter? The old hills were there; the sun would rise and set as it used to do long ago; there were spots sacred and familiar which she could visit; it was *home*, let them say or do what they pleased.

Ruth for the first time gazed upon that place of which she had heard Naomi so often speak. This was the land which God had given to Abraham's seed. These were the people who had the knowledge of Jehovah. Perhaps she also thought of the past—of the day when four strangers from the

village now before her took up their abode in her own land; of her acquaintance with them; of her compassion for them in their loneliness, leading to a more intimate acquaintance with their character; of her love for one member of the family in particular, resulting in marriage; of their losses and of hers; of patient, holy, loving, charming Naomi, and all she had said and done; and of Orpah, and her foolish choice and her sad state. And now she, in turn, was a stranger in a foreign land. What would the future be? Trusting in God, all would be well.

Advance, weary pilgrims! The journey has been safely accomplished. God has protected and guided you. He has further good in store for you. You are entering Bethlehem, "the house of bread."

The village was gained, and, as they proceeded to some particular spot, their appearance attracted unusual attention. A close scrutiny produced a hasty recognition. "Is it?—can it be? Surely it is!" The thoughts found expression. "Is this Naomi? Is this careworn, prematurely-old, weary traveller, the once prosperous, handsome, joyous wife of Elimelech?"

The question pierced Naomi's heart of hearts, and in agony, she replied, "Call me not Naomi (handsome, joyous): call me Mara (bitter): for the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me." Then came the honest confession, however humbling: "I went out full" (having husband, children, goods), "and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

Ere long a home was found for the wanderers, and then Ruth began to show how great was her care, and how deep was her love for her mother-in-law; and while she is doing so we must, for the present, bid her farewell.

Reader, hast thou gone back from Bethlehem to Moab—from the church to the world? If so, thou wilt be a loser, not a gainer thereby. Thou wilt suffer for thy conduct. Oh! return ere the rod descends upon thee. Let not Christ cast thee off. Come again to the company of the faithful. Never mind reproach. Be not ashamed of

humility. Remember what God says to returning backsliders: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon." Oh! then, once more leave the world, and claim thine inheritance amongst the children of the Most High. Naomi lived to be happy again, and so shalt thou. If some good persons should remind thee of thy folly, and ask if this repentant one were the once-joyous and prosperous Christian, thou canst answer: "Yes, it is; but, ah! I have been foolish and self-willed. I voluntarily went astray; but the Lord hath brought me back again. He has once more called me to my proper place in his church—his house of bread."

But thou art, maybe, a Moabite—one who has never forsaken the world, and addressed Christ as Ruth did her mother-in-law. Ah! thy pleasures will not continue; thy idolatry begets remorse and ruin; the friendship thou hast for the world is enmity against God. Thou art in a sad state, and in great danger of never-ending woe. Beware! While the day of grace lasts seek the Lord. Take warning ere it be too late. *Now is the turning-point of life.* Life or death, which shall it be? Wilt thou go with Orpah, have a short span of the pleasures of sin, and then perish; or wilt thou, at once and for ever, forsake the world, join the standard of Christ, begin thy pilgrimage to the abiding city, tread in Ruth's steps, and be saved? The road has its difficulties, but it is not long. A little labour, a few hours of weariness, one or two bitter trials, and the land of Beulah and the Delectable Mountains will be crossed; the golden walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, illuminated by the glory of the Lamb and the presence of God, will rise before the eye of faith; Jordan's stream will be safely forded, and the eternal and blessed home reached. Come away! Follow Ruth!

I can almost forgive Elimelech for having gone to Moab, for had he not done so I should never have known this woman's lovely character, nor should I have profited by her glorious example

A WINTER'S NIGHT.

"**C**OLD! so cold!" thus a woman pale
And wan, sung to her child,
Straining it close to her breast, she sang
This lullaby strange and wild:—

"Cold! so cold! Little one, sleep,
Better to sleep than sigh;
Better to sleep than wail and weep,
Better than all—to die!"

Lullaby fit for that weird-like night,
With the ice so thick on the pane;
Whose jagged edges cut through the air
Till it moaned like a soul in pain.

"Cold! so cold!" There's a smould'ring ash
Lies hid near the rusty bars
Of the empty grate, that is hungry and cold—
More cold than the frosty stars.

There's a crust of bread by the woman's side,
A broken plate and knife;
Relics dear of her little store
When she bore the name of "wife."

But there's snow without, and snow within,
And snow on the churchyard grass;
And she wonders whether *he* feels as cold
As the winds with shudderings pass.

She wonders whether it's colder there
In his narrow pauper-grave,
Or whether it's colder still to lie
Under a frozen wave.

"Cold! so cold!" and the baby cries
For food she cannot give,
And she wonders which were the greater wrong,
Sinning to die, or live!

The sick child opens his weary eyes,
Wearily closed again,
And she wonders whether a love like this
Was worth the travail and pain!

"Cold! so cold!" not a cheery voice,
Not a word, be it ever so low,
To bid her look to that brighter sky
That will melt both frost and snow.

"Cold! so cold!" she shivers to think
Of the nights before the spring,
And she wonders if flowers ever bloom,
Or larks and thrushes sing.

It's twenty years since she heard a song,
And as time has changed her all,
How does she know that thrushes sing?
That leaves still bud and fall?

She knows that winter brings want and cold,
That fever is summer's breath—
That a pauper's grave will be dug for her,
For the end of all life is death.

Tired of wondering, tired of woe—
It was better to sleep than sigh—
Better to sleep than wake and weep,
Better than all—to die!

F. R.

A WORD UPON BEING NERVOUS.

BY THE REV. W. M. STATHAM, AUTHOR OF "SURE STANDARDS OF THE FAITH," ETC.



SUPPOSE our grandfathers and grandmothers had nerves! Whatever, however, be the fact concerning this query, they seem to have said nothing much about them. If the development hypothesis be true, then, perchance, in the theory of progression, we are just arriving at the nerve age; and are by this new possession so much the more advanced than our predecessors.

Future students of our present age will, at least, have no difficulty in deciding that we in this era had nerves. Some daily paper, picked up, yellow and faded, from what will be then the antiquated Davenport drawers, will show advertisements enough of *nervo-arterial* essences to substantiate the fact that this was the age of nerves!

It is impossible to commence a paper on nervous people without the feeling that our subject takes in a very large part of the community indeed; and that, if the subject has an amusing side, it has also a very, very serious and suggestive one.

Of course, there are multitudes who are only sentimentally nervous—not constitutionally so at all. They include amongst them many large, healthy, florid sort of beings, who look as if they could take a turn with the navvies at the next railway cutting; but they have somehow come to believe that they are extremely delicate, and consequently become full of sentiment about themselves. Whether they be male or female, such subjects, on the whole, eat, drink, and sleep

amazingly well—only they hate noises, because they shake their nerves so, and they quickly decline bathing, boating, or sick-visiting, because it's just the one thing they feel so nervous about. They would not at all feel interested in the inquiry, How are your poor feet? but the cap would fit beautifully, and they would look very sympathetic indeed, if you were tenderly to ask, How are your poor nerves?

Very many are wickedly nervous. They have worn out this beautiful physical harp—the human constitution—by dissipation, self-indulgence, or sloth. We have nothing to say to them, save this, that all the prophylactics in the universe will not alter God's laws. You cannot kill, and make alive; you cannot indulge in sin, and live in health at the same time. "He that sinneth against me," says the Almighty, "wrongeth his own soul." Nervous excitement is, perhaps, one of the most manifest and marked punishments of excess. Look at the inebriate's trembling hand; look at the signs of tremulous weakness which mark the mien of the dissolute and the gay. All you can say in such cases is, man reaps his harvest in the very sphere of his guilt. "That which a man soweth shall he also reap."

Some are nervous from cowardice and selfishness. Living for themselves, they register the thermometer of their own sensations every day. Will this make me healthier? Will that make me happier? Such are the questions they continually ask themselves. They are afraid to go out of them-

selves to do good. They do not like to risk life, health, or peace for the common weal; and the consequence is that they become morbid self-anatomists, the pulse-feelers and the danger-signal watchers of society. They know when an east wind is coming. They understand enough of the "materia medica" to make themselves mightily miserable! To hear them talk of digestion and diaphragms, of chylification and absorption, you would think that they knew, as schoolboys say, a deal about it: the fact being this, that they have muddled their minds with the contents of some twopenny pamphlet, and frightened themselves into some fresh *maladie imaginaire* every other day. When a man opens a cupboard and shows me a skeleton—as a doctor did to me when a lad—I confess it isn't a pleasant thing to look at; but that is nothing compared with looking at yourself in an animal physiology book. Saddest of all is it when the anxiety concerning health turns to consideration of the brain, and the nervous subject takes up some cerebral treatise. It's pretty well all up then, for, as Dryden says—

"Each molehill thought swells to a huge Olympus;
While we, fantastic dreamers, heave, and puff,
And sweat with an imagination's weight."

It is then that every darting shoot becomes a premonition of disease, and every heavy weight a softening of the brain. It seems to me that such treatises, instead of making people, as is suggested, wise in time, often make them ready for nervous panic. But at the root of all lies this same morbid self-watchfulness and care. Quickly would these nervous dreads be cured by energetic efforts for the good of others; by kindly, hearty considerations for the common weal; by working with both hands earnestly for the rectification of human wrongs, and the bettering of our brethren in the world.

Then, there are the constitutionally nervous: these we pity, for these we pray. No sadder heritage of trial can well be borne. No specifics will altogether meet their case; though clear air, and plenty of cold water, and cheerful society will do a great deal in the right direction.

I have never seen a treatise on the relation of Christianity to nervousness; yet would it be a most suggestive subject, inasmuch as many of the nervous dreads of life are understood and answered in the Gospel. How many are painfully anxious concerning the morrow, who need above all Christianity's beautiful corrective, "Consider the lilies, how they grow!" How many who are worn with care about those near and dear to them, should remember the words, "Casting all your care upon Him, for he careth for you!" How many who are nervous concerning death, might ponder the words, "O

death! where is thy sting?" until they realised most sincerely the feeling of Paul—"to be with Christ is far better." There is nothing so comforting as Christianity. "Let not your heart be troubled" sounds throughout all its teachings to those who are the children of God. Many of the most nervous amongst the sons of men—constitutionally nervous, I mean—will never, perhaps, have that disease completely eradicated. Born with them, it will die with them. But for all that, it may be assuaged and relieved in a multitude of ways by the Word of God. "Peace I leave with you," is no light legacy, and we may be the heirs to it by simple faith in Jesus Christ. The relation of Christianity to nervousness is far more comprehensive than we think, because it has to do with human griefs as well as spiritual trials, and because not alone have we its teaching, but we have its history in the hearts and lives of multitudes who have found in the balm of Gilead a soothing medicine for all the woes of life! Christianity shows us the agency of God in little things; shows us that nothing can startle or surprise God, as it does so often ourselves, and that he is ready for all emergencies in our history; shows us, above all, that beautiful picture of the Fatherhood of God, which has beneath it the words: "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Some people are spiritually nervous. Their earnest desire to be saved runs into timorousness lest they should not have faith enough or love enough. Instead of rejoicing in the fulness of Christ, they mourn over the emptiness of themselves; instead of being comforted by the consciousness that Christ is their Redeemer, they are nervously trying to complete a redemption for themselves. Here, again, with all the quiverings and beatings of man's great religious heart, there is nothing which so silences his dread as the gospel of the grace of God.

In closing this paper I must be allowed to rebuke those who trifle with the nervous. Who can minister to a mind diseased? True, that is hard enough. But, on the other hand, instead of ministering to the nervous you may maim them. Some kinds of nervousness may be better slain, perhaps, by ridicule than any other weapon—but not so all kinds. I have seen some people suffer severely from the wanton jests of the hale and hearty. Screech goes the whistle—screech—screech—screech! "Dear me!" says the delicate invalid in the carriage, "what is the matter?" "I rather fancy the down express is close behind us," says the think-me-clever traveller; and it is painful to see the agony of fear in the nervous, twitching countenance; whilst many who have had symptoms of disease in head or heart have been injured for life by acting upon the medical advertisements which fill so many papers, and which prey upon



(Drawn by B. BRADLEY.)

"Oh! the happy hearts in the old home by the bonnie banks o' Tay!"—p. 330.

the fears of nervous people. If you want to know how many people are nervous about themselves, just look at the duty paid on quack medicines; and if you want to know how miserable the nervous may be made, just read those minute descriptions of human ailments printed in the programmes of disease, which each in turn the nervous think themselves to have, and sometimes nearly all together. Truly the age of nerves is a very prosperous one for those who prey on the fears of the feeble and the foibles of the foolish. "Long live nervousness!" would not be an inappropriate toast for those who fill their exchequers with the rewards of practising upon human fears.

Nervousness is, alas! promoted by many means which the subjects of it have it in their power to prevent. Such as late hours, luxurious living, and alternate stimulants and sedatives. And permit me, just for a moment, to remark that nervousness grows upon people. Not only does it become habit—man's second nature—but like a well-used riding-habit, becomes the worse for wear. It is positively alarming to hear, as perhaps you have done, of the

good lady who fancied she was a china teapot, and was terribly afraid that somebody would chip her, or crack her; and there has been such a case! It is astounding to hear of a lady who fancied herself grown to such a rotund size that she could not pass through her bedroom door, and remained for weeks within her room, in decent health, until strong arms solved her difficulty by suddenly seizing her, and carrying her out! Do you smile at such cases? remember this, dear reader: there is nothing on earth which you cannot believe, if you encourage the presence of nervous dreads! Therefore, begin the battle at once—labour and pray. Seek the aid of Christ, and put forth all your power. Be cheerful, be earnest, be unselfish and active. Go about doing good. In a word, go out of yourself! Enjoy, in each day you live, as much of fresh air and exercise as you can secure. Cultivate a spirit of perennial gratitude for all the mercies of God; place yourself in his kind hands, and as you move on your pilgrim way, relieved of this terrible nightmare of the mind, you will sing at your work, and rejoice in God, and, perhaps, not in vain have read a Word on Being Nervous.

OUT IN AUSTRALIA.

OCH, bright's the sun in your land, and fair
your flowers to see;

Your hills, and dales, and winding streams,
it's dear they are to me.

It's dear they are, and fair they are, and never from
my heart

Their grandeur, and their beauty, and their bright-
ness shall depart.

Yet, comrades, though I love them well, my thoughts
are far away

In the leafy dells of the old home by the bonnie
banks o' Tay.

It's there my father lies in death, it's there I long
to be,

Where mother spins beside the hearth, and Lucy
waits for me;

Where grows the daisy at your feet, the red haws
overhead,

And the heather, like a living thing, leaps up beneath
your tread;

Where calls the cushat to its mate, in the gloaming
still and grey.

Oh! the happy hearts in the old home by the bonnie
banks o' Tay!

'Twas there all in the summer time, with Lucy at my
side,

I sat and watched the golden sun sink in the silver
tide,

And saw the moon, for love of her, smile sweetly in
the skies;

But sun and moon, oh! what were they to the light
in Lucy's eyes?

And there beside her father's door she gave her
heart away.

God keep my love in the old home by the bonnie
banks o' Tay.

Now, comrades, though I leave you all, I leave you
with a tear,

For many are the blithesome days I've spent among
you here;

And you shall have my thoughts, my prayers, when
far across the sea,

And, friends, I know, when I am gone, you'll some-
times think of me;

Think of the mate who loved you here, shall love
you far away,

And pledge you oft in the old home by the bonnie
banks o' Tay.

Then farewell to your hills and dales, the streams
that bless your soil,

And farewell, nights of bitter care, and days of honest
toil.

Farewell, farewell! O land of gold! O new home
in the South!

The worm shall feed upon my heart, the dust be in
my mouth,

When I shall cease to think of thee—think of thee
night and day,

And bless thee, land, in the old home by the bonnie
banks o' Tay.

MATTHIAS BAER.

DEEPPDALE VICARAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN."

CHAPTER LXI.

AN ABRUPT QUESTION.

THE embarrassment and the difficulties of Frank's position seemed more than he could bear. He soon reached the village inn. The little room was in apple-pie order. Through the open window came in the fresh morning air, so grateful to the jaded nerves of the invalid. Every attention had been paid to his comfort, for it was evident Reginald Chauncey was still supposed to be a person whose means were unlimited.

"Well, Frank!" was the salutation of Reginald Chauncey, as soon as he and his son were alone; "and how long am I to lie in this den? Will a week do it, Frank?"

"No; nor a month."

"Frank!"—and the invalid turned on him a look of horror—"you don't mean to say that I must lie here a month?"

"Worse things than that have happened to—to my mother," said Frank, involuntarily.

"Your mother! she is quite different to me, Frank. Your mother likes to suffer; she is one of those women who do."

Frank was silent a moment, partly from the power and vehemence of his feelings. His father went on to say—

"Your mother ought to congratulate herself on having a husband like me, Frank. She might have married—a very inferior person."

Frank made no reply.

"Between ourselves, Frank, she is not a woman calculated to shine in the society in which I have been accustomed to move."

Not a word from Frank.

"And to which I am now, in fact, returning. My difficulties, thank goodness! are at an end. Mr. Twist is a capital fellow. I wish you knew him, Frank."

Frank was all this time debating whether it was safe to tell his father that the woman, of whom he had been speaking so lightly, was a saint in heaven. Sometimes he felt as though the words would burst from him, whether he would or not; and as, viewed in a medical light, it would not be safe, he thought he had best retire. He had risen for that purpose, when his father stopped him.

"What an unsociable dog you are! You might hear me to the end."

Frank sat down again.

"You never were any company for me!" whimpered Reginald Chauncey. "I believe if I had had suitable associations in my own home," added he, in a moralising tone, "it might have been better for me."

Many such speeches would have driven Frank to

extremities. Perhaps his father had a suspicion that they would, and he hurried on to say—

"Mr. Twist has arranged my affairs to my perfect satisfaction. I am now a free man—a man without a taint upon his character. I can go or come, or do whatever I list. That's something to boast of!"

"Father," said Frank, abruptly, and every nerve tingling with a strange sensation of alarm and curiosity, "were you ever in the neighbourhood of Deepdale before?"

The sick man started suddenly up on his couch.

"Frank, put that blind down. Don't you see how the sun is glaring me to death?—put it down!"

He spoke sharply and savagely. His face, pallid before, looked white and fierce. He turned away, and drew the coverlet over his eyes.

Frank put down the blind. The sunbeam, that had struggled in, was partly obscured by the shadowing branches of the elm-tree. When he had done so, and had returned to the couch, his father said—

"You may go now, Frank. I am tired to death with talking. Good night!"

Frank, an undefined sensation of dread stealing to his heart, stood a moment, hesitating whether to go or to stay.

Should he probe the mystery again? should he again attempt to remove the veil? or was it premature?

A respite would be almost welcome, and he agreed with himself to grant it.

The cloud might come; it might burst with violence. He feared it would; but, at least, *not now!* At least, for the present, he could hold back the evil. And, fearing and trembling, he went his way.

CHAPTER LXII.

A "PHILOSOPHER."

REGINALD CHAUNCEY had now been ill a month. He was, to be sure, decidedly, though slowly, improving. In another week he would be able, not to go home, for he had none, but to drift away, and be lost sight of.

Things had been tolerably quiet at Deepdale during this interval. Simon Croskeys had prevailed with his friend Lewin to suspend the matter for the present. In fact, Simon had not been altogether comfortable in his mind, since the interview with the widow.

The widow's health and spirits began to decline. Perhaps the ban, which the populace at Deepdale had placed upon her, was getting heavy to bear. Perhaps the alternations of hope and fear tried her sorely. Perhaps she had become the victim of suspense. Certain it is, that she drooped, like a flower that lacks the genial moisture of heaven. Phil watched her

with a tenderness and solicitude far beyond what might have been expected. He would sit for hours, his eyes fixed upon her. If she wanted anything, he would fly to fetch it. He spared her all the trouble he could over his learning. But of the man at the inn he said nothing; most unwillingly, his lips were sealed.

Dionysius Curling had not altogether a pleasant time of it. His visits to the cottage were much embittered by the presence of Phil. Phil was always there; there was no getting rid of him, for he refused to go; and he never failed to set the vicar at open defiance.

When, one evening, Dionysius, glad of the opportunity, ventured to observe "that Mr. Chauncey seemed as if he would do nothing," Phil was up in arms in a minute.

"He's doing more than you think for, Mr. Curling; he's the best friend we've got!" A speech very unpalatable to Dionysius, inasmuch as it implied some secret understanding between the trio, to the exclusion of himself. Nor did the widow resume those delicious tête-à-têtes on the grass. She was languid and spiritless, and seemed disinclined to renew the slightest approach to the subject which was next to the heart of Dionysius Curling; so that that worthy gentleman was for the present under a cloud.

The month had passed, and another month begun; still Frank had not elicited the information he wanted; nor had he, as yet, alluded to the mournful bereavement which had taken place during Mr. Chauncey's absence from his home. The death of Mrs. Chauncey. He meant to relate the circumstance, with all its details—details which must needs cause bitter regret to the man who had broken that tender and faithful heart!

"I can tell him she has forgiven him," thought Frank.

It was strange that Reginald Chauncey should have made no further allusion to his wife. Frank thought that he supposed her to be living with himself, at Deepdale; and it was characteristic of the man to endeavour to shirk his responsibilities.

No doubt he had little wish to disturb the convenient arrangement he fancied had been made between his wife and her son. He would come and go at pleasure. He could ride about on his gallant steed, and dip into the cream of existence. Saddled with a wife, his pleasures might run the risk of being somewhat curtailed. Frank did not fear, now, any ill results from the disclosure he was about to make; and, armed at all points, he went forth one morning to open up the subject.

Reginald Chauncey had quitted his couch, and was able to take moderate exercise. Frank found him in the garden of the inn, sunning himself in a warm sheltered corner. He had contrived to get about him as many luxuries as that part of the country afforded. He had his bottle of Madeira on a table before him; his *Times* newspaper, which he was reading as he reclined in the easy chair,

borrowed for his especial comfort; a dish of grapes, from a neighbouring hothouse, were placed by the bottle of Madeira. Reginald Chauncey's palate was accustomed to delicacies of this sort. He had been discussing both ere Frank arrived.

The sight of the grapes and the wine, the air of Epicurean enjoyment about the man, and the remembrance of what Mrs. Chauncey had suffered—her privations, her actual want of those necessities deemed essential by her poorer neighbours, stung Frank to the quick. He could not find it in his heart to spare his father a single pang.

"He shall know everything," thought he—"everything!"

Yet it seemed difficult, at once, to thrust so painful a subject on the ears of Reginald Chauncey. Filling his glass, the disciple of Epicurus glanced at his son. "Your good health, my boy. I mean to start to-morrow!"

Frank bowed coldly in recognition of the compliment.

"You are quite out of my hands now, father."

"Exactly: no evil can last beyond a certain period. Are you in business for yourself?"

"No, I am not, at present."

"You are Dr. Plume's assistant, I suppose?"

Frank nodded assent.

"Perhaps you will acquaint that worthy individual to whom I have not had the pleasure of being introduced, that he had better send in his account this evening—else he may run the risk of losing his money."

"Father," said Frank, and the mournful expression of his face might have served as a kind of preface, "I did not like to tell you while you were ill—but—" He paused. His father nodded his head, and smiled blandly.

"Say on, my son—say on; Reginald Chauncey has learned to be a philosopher."

"Once, only, during your illness," resumed Frank, his sorrowful countenance, contrasting with the jocund air of his father,—"once only have you referred to my mother."

"Indeed! I was not aware of that fact," said Reginald, gaily and airily. "You have a faculty for observation, Frank: a capital thing for a doctor!"

Frank was silent.

"I suppose the excellent woman in question—for excellent she is, in the main, despite her little peculiarities—I suppose she is quite well?"

Frank looked steadily at him. There was a solemnity in that look, which cast a shadow even over the levity of Reginald Chauncey.

"On my word, Frank! what is the matter?"

Then Frank told him. He did not spare anything in the recital. He told him of the anguish, the consuming sorrow, that had embittered the last days of Mrs. Chauncey; how she had watched and waited for him who came no more; how cruelly she had suffered from his desertion; how she had wasted away, and died of that worst and most torturing malady, a broken heart!

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE MEMORY OF THE DEPARTED.

"On my word, Frank! you don't mean to tell me this as a fact—that Mrs. Chauncey is really dead?"

He had not dropped his cigar; but he had laid it carefully on the table, with an evident intention of resuming it at some more convenient opportunity. He was feeling for his handkerchief, which, of the finest cambric, and abundantly scented, he now drew forth.

"It is very shocking—very shocking, indeed!" and the scented handkerchief was applied to his eyes.

The fountain of Frank's tears had been opened afresh; while he was speaking of his mother, he wept with all the bitterness of a recent bereavement. Now, ceasing to weep, he sat, his head resting on his hand.

"You see, Frank," continued Reginald Chauncey, removing his handkerchief from his eyes, which, at present, were guiltless of a single tear, "I am a man of feeling; I can hardly bear—this—shock!"

And then, as if he suddenly reminded himself of a favourite solace, he laid hold of the bottle of Madeira, and, pouring out a glassful, tossed it off in a moment.

"There, I feel better! Frank, allow me;" and he again seized the bottle.

Frank shook his head. "Not on any account," replied he, firmly.

"Just as you choose, my dear boy; but indeed it is a capital remedy in case of depression. You give way, Frank; you always did. Look at me!" and Reginald Chauncey drew himself up with the air of a philosopher.

Frank had hard work to control his feelings at that precise juncture. Reginald Chauncey, meanwhile, had taken up his cigar, and was coaxing it into relighting.

"And where—you need not mind telling me, Frank; I can bear it *now*—where was your dear mother interred?"

Frank told him.

"I thought so! Ah, what an uncertain, fleeting thing is human life—even as a vapour!"

Here he paused, as if wholly overcome by the moral and religious considerations suggested.

Then he asked, with some abruptness, "And who—you need not mind telling me, either—who bore the expenses of the funeral?"

"I did," said Frank, shortly.

"That was good of you, Frank; that was filial piety!"

Frank looked reproachfully at his father.

"It was unfortunate, just then," continued Reginald Chauncey, who was smoking his cigar with the utmost composure. "I was cleaned out, Frank, to the very last shilling. It was a terrible time for me!"

"And do you suppose it was less so to my mother?" asked Frank, quietly.

"Your mother! Ah, Frank, she—somehow or other—she did not mind. I cast no reflections!" for Frank had hastily risen, and with an air of disgust which could not be concealed. "No doubt, poor thing, it was uncomfortable for *her*," added he, by way of a compromise.

And the poor woman had fancied this man would grieve for her! She had with her dying breath bequeathed him her forgiveness.

He might crave for her forgiveness some time, in that dread hour when his sins would be set in order before him—when the memory of wrongs inflicted, and injustice dealt out, would crowd round his departing spirit, if indeed space were left even for this;—when the careworn face and wistful eyes of her who was gone, would rise up, as it were, in judgment against him.

But, for the present, he had escaped death, and was about to plunge again into the giddy whirl of a life of pleasure. He wanted no forgiveness. It did not seem to occur to him, that he had been the means of hurrying his wife to her grave. His view of the case was from a different point of view. When he had mourned for her, in the finest broadcloth, with black gloves of the best quality, and crape round his hat, he would suppose he had done all that was required of him.

"See what respect he pays to her memory!" would be the observation made on that occasion.

As for Frank, his heart was full. He could not enter into any further discussion. Yonder was the dread mystery that he needs must fathom, ere he allowed his father to depart; but he could not venture on it now. Nor could he endure to dwell longer on the subject of his late bereavement. I say *his* bereavement, for to Reginald Chauncey it was no bereavement at all.

Reginald had no wish to detain his son. The conversation had taken a turn so unexpected, and so gloomy, that the sooner it was ended the better.

He readily promised to be in attendance the following morning, when Frank should bid him farewell, and also settle with him the account due to Dr. Plume.

After that, Reginald Chauncey would go his way!

CHAPTER LXIV.

WAS HE GUILTY?

FRANK meant to do it. On no account whatever would he let the opportunity slip. He was bound by every principle of honour and of integrity. He meant to search the matter to the bottom. He intended to find out the reason why his father had been seen at Deepdale Vicarage. The circumstances of the case were suspicious. Nay, the absolute certainty of the thing, for Frank did not for a moment think there was a mistake of identity.

The fact of the robbery taking place that very day; the confusion and alarm exhibited by his father; the probability of Clara Melrose being an innocent

woman; the unscrupulous character of his father; his money embarrassments—all these things suggested themselves to Frank's mind, during the weary hours of that day, and of that sleepless night.

He could hardly realise the misery of his position, should these suspicions prove correct. His soul recoiled, as with loathing, from the bare idea. Still, be the consequences what they might, he would hold to his word. He would go through with it.

He rose the next morning, with this full determination in his mind. He was pale and haggard. There was a compression about his mouth, and a wan, weary look in his eyes, which excited the compassion of Dr. Plume.

"Poor fellow! I am working you to death," said he, kindly.

"Indeed, I think the work trifling," replied Frank, endeavouring to speak cheerfully.

"It is like you to say so, Frank; but, as soon as my ankle is well, you will see that it will be more trifling still," replied Dr. Plume.

The moment breakfast was over, up came the gig, to take Frank his rounds.

"I suppose that gentleman, who chooses to go incog, will be leaving to-day," said Dr. Plume.

"Yes; he intends to leave to-day," replied Frank, mechanically.

"You will do all that is right and proper, Frank, I think he might have come down to Deepdale, and called upon me."

"There will not be time now," observed Frank.

"No; of course not. Has he a wife?"

"I don't suppose he has."

"If he had, we should, perhaps, have seen her; though those fellows who ramble about the country incog don't often make the best husbands."

"They do not," replied Frank. After which remark he stepped into his gig, and drove off.

It was a clear, bracing morning in the autumn. The fields had mostly been reaped, and the harvest gathered in. Here and there, however, some tardy farmer was carrying the remnant of his corn. The air was cool and pleasant. The country had not changed much in its aspect; yet the tints and hues of the declining year were just beginning to be apparent. Soon would the harvest be past, and the summer ended.

Frank drove, in a leisurely manner, towards the village which his father was about to quit. He had no reason for haste, and he had many considerations to entertain. He knew not how he should introduce the subject of the robbery. He felt a nervous terror at the thought of what might ensue. Perhaps a disclosure of guilt. Perhaps the bare, naked fact, that Reginald Chauncey had taken the old vicar's money!

So terrible was this idea, so torturing to the brain, that, had the drive lasted much longer, Frank would not have been in a fit state for the interview. But yonder was the spire of the village church, and yonder, too, the village inn, nestling beneath the great spreading elm.

Frank stopped his gig at the garden gate, and, dismounting, went in. The morning air was too chill for Reginald Chauncey. He had his table and his bottle of Madeira within doors. As soon as he had finished his wine, and Frank had paid his visit, he was intending to depart. He was going to see a friend, who had some shooting on the other side of Deepdale.

"Not that I am particularly fond of this neighbourhood," said he, carelessly; "but Tom White is a capital fellow, and his preserves are first-rate. I shall stay there till the hunt begins. That is, when I have run up to town and got my mourning;" and he glanced at his light summer apparel.

Frank's time had now come. He felt as if the opportunity lost, would be gone for ever. Dr. Plume's account was settled. Nothing remained but to bid his father farewell. At this identical moment, he fixed his eyes steadily on the countenance of Reginald Chauncey, and said, in a tone of keen anxiety—

"Father, were you ever at Deepdale Vicarage?"

Reginald Chauncey had the glass in his hand holding it up to the light. The next thing Frank remembered was a loud crash. The fragments of the tumbler lay scattered on the floor.

"Father," repeated Frank, impelled to it by a kind of fascination, "will you answer my question—were you ever at Deepdale Vicarage?"

The two bold eyes glared at him over the table. It was a frightful face—so white, so fierce, so haggard. All these expressions had come over it with the question. They were not visible before.

Neither of the two men spoke for a minute. Frank was looking steadily at Reginald Chauncey; Reginald Chauncey was glaring back at Frank.

During that silence, Frank felt convinced of his father's guilt. It was a conviction that seemed as though it would wreck and uproot his whole being—one of those sudden desolations that bring utter and hopeless ruin. But it was a firm, unshaken conviction. His father was the criminal!

The bearings of the case were wrapt as yet in darkness. How he came there—what was his motive—how he was able to accomplish the cruel and heartless robbery, Frank knew not. But of one thing he was assured. It had been accomplished, and by Reginald Chauncey!

His eye still rested on the face of his father. His was that kind of look, by which a superior intelligence quells that which is base and brutish. It subdued the hard bold front of Reginald Chauncey. Gradually, the eyes that had attempted to hurl a species of mute defiance, sunk. The head drooped. Presently, he raised his hand, and covered his face. Then, the silence grew more awful still—it was the silence that precedes a confession.

Frank rose. All throughout, he had been upheld by a powerful excitement. A keen sense of justice, and what was due to a person whose character had been blasted, urged him on. His own heart was bleeding.

Ah! for many a day would this wound smart and fester. But still he must go forward; he must tear the veil from before the sin, even of his parent!

He approached his father. He told him, in a low, hurried voice, that he suspected him of this crime. He related to him the story of Clara Melrose. He conjured him, by all that was sacred on earth or in heaven, to reveal the truth. Was he guilty?

The man was not wholly hardened. He had a lingering touch of some better nature. As Frank spoke—he trembled—it might be that, for the first time, he felt compunction.

Certain it is, that when the sad tale was ended, he uncovered his face, not defiant now, but sorrowful, and said, in accents of bitter self-reproach, and of remorse, "Yes, I did it; I took the old vicar's money!"

(To be continued.)

THE CROCODILE AND THE ISLAND.

A STORY FOR THE YOUNG.

LILLY LUCE was the youngest child of a rich planter in South America. She had several brothers and sisters, but all being older than Lilly, they made a great pet of her, giving her all her own way, and doing everything they could think of to please her. Lilly had a black nurse also, a funny old woman named Sally, who never did or thought of anything but taking care of Lilly. Now, as I dare say some of you can easily believe, Lilly had a great deal too much of her own way, and became petted and spoiled, often getting very angry when any one contradicted her. She was very fond of playing tricks to amuse herself, not caring a bit how they annoyed or frightened other people. So, you see, Lilly was not quite what I should call a good little girl, as it is neither kind nor amiable to tease and worry people for fun, and just the reverse of doing as we would be done by—a rule all of us should try and keep to. So every one petted Lilly until she grew very naughty; and when old Sally would sometimes try to keep her in order, she only laughed; or sometimes she would even fly in a passion and tear the poor nurse's cap off, pull her hair, and scratch her dreadfully. But Sally never told Lilly's papa, foolishly thinking it would be a pity to have Lilly punished.

One day Mr. and Mrs. Luce went to spend the day with some friends a good way off. Lilly wished to go, and as she was not allowed to do so grew very angry, and, when she went into the garden, determined to play a trick to frighten them all.

Now, it happened that the gardens of her father's house stretched down to the banks of a large river in which there were great numbers of crocodiles. I dare say you have often seen pictures of these creatures, and remember how fierce-looking and terrible they look with their great big mouths and little cunning-looking eyes.

Lilly was never allowed to go near this river; so what do you think the trick she had planned was? Neither more nor less than to slip away from Sally, run down to the river, and get on to a pretty island she had seen while walking with her mother, thinking that if she could hide there she would frighten everybody, and punish them for not letting her do as she wished. It was not very difficult to

run away from Sally, who was both old and fat, and besides, often went to sleep; so Lilly played about very softly until she saw Sally's head begin to nod; then she stole away, walking upon tip-toe until she got behind a thick row of flowers, then, lifting up her head, she ran off as fast as she could, up one path, down another, only pausing when she reached the bank of the river, and saw the smooth water gleaming like gold beneath the sunlight. The island lay about twenty yards from the bank, and Lilly, never thinking a bit about the depth of the water, splashed in. Fortunately, the place was very shallow, so she only wet her shoes and stockings.

The island was not large, but was completely covered with beautiful flowers; and Lilly, after sitting listening for any symptoms of old Sally's looking for her, thought she would build a little house for herself with the reeds and flowers, so that she could hide all the better. So she pulled a great lot of reeds and branches, piling them up; then she put others across like a roof, and, creeping in, lay down, falling fast asleep. She was awakened by feeling something cold and wet touching her face, and, opening her eyes, she saw the great wet nose of a crocodile close beside her, its eyes twinkling as much as to say, "Ah, ha! I have caught a nice little bit for my supper!"

Now Lilly was much too frightened either to move or cry out; so she lay trembling until the beast pulled his head away, and, thinking he could eat poor Lilly whenever he liked, he lay down to have a rest, keeping his great body close to the little girl.

Poor Lilly! she began to see the folly of playing tricks then, and wondered what her papa and mamma would think when they found she had been eaten by a great ugly crocodile, and if she had not been frightened of waking him she would have cried bitterly. As it was, the tears ran fast enough down her cheeks, as she listened, hoping now to hear some one coming.

When old Sally missed her young lady she called for her, at the top of her voice, promising her all sorts of nice things if she would only come back. Then getting no answer, she began hunting about among the bushes; but, at last, seeing nothing of her, old

Sally got frightened, and called some of the house servants to help her, and they were all searching and making a great fuss when Lilly's papa and mamma came home.

You may fancy what a fright they were in; her mamma could do nothing but cry, and her papa, after questioning all the people, and finding that they had searched all over the gardens, let out three great bloodhounds. Now, bloodhounds can find out where a person has gone, by smelling their foot-marks. So, directly these dogs came to the path Lilly had taken, they began barking, and ran quickly along, until they reached the river, and there catching sight of the crocodile they stood still, making a terrible howling.

"Oh! how pleased Lilly was when she heard them, for she knew her papa would be there too, and so it seemed did Master Crocodile, for he slipped quietly off the island and dived under the water, without once thinking of the supper he was leaving behind.

No sooner was the crocodile gone than Lilly jumped up and began screaming; so her papa ran across to the island, and carried her back in his arms, thanking God that she was safe. But when Lilly told him how she had got to the island, and that she wanted to frighten them, he was very angry with her, and told her how wicked it was to do so. Lilly had thought so too, as she lay crying beside the crocodile, and became a much better little girl for the future.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. Who Kenneth took and called it by his name?
2. Who raised in ~~the~~ breast a holy shame?
3. What prince for Judah first his offering gave?
4. Who raised the dead man let down in his grave?
5. The place which Aquila for Corinth left.
6. Who was by Sibbechai of life bereft?
7. The hill where Joshua when dead was laid.
8. Before whose threshing-floor God's angel stayed?
9. Who made the Jews set all their captives free?
10. Whither did all nine kings of Canaan flee?
11. What Jewish prince for quietness was famed?
12. The place where Ezra once a fast proclaimed.
13. What queen her royal husband disobeyed?
14. What stone a sign of peace or war was made?
15. Whose daughter at her son's death took his throne?
16. One by her husband left in Moab alone.
17. What mighty nation against Assa came,

But by God's help was swiftly put to shame!

All earthly boasts are vain:

Of goodness we have none;

On Christ's alone we must rely,

For none is good save One.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC ON PAGE 288.

"Urbane."—Rom. xvi. 9.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. U ziah | 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21. |
| 2. R hoda | Acts xii. 13, 14. |
| 3. B ar-Jesus | Acts xiii. 6. |
| 4. A raunah | 2 Sam. xiv. 18-24. |
| 5. N icodemus | John iii. 1. |
| 6. E d | Joah. xxii. 34. |

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ERRATUM.—In Second List, amount acknowledged as "Miss Rorden," should have been "Miss Pratt, Howden, 41 is."

LEFT ON THE LINE.



(Drawn by F. OAKES.)

"When I looked into it I saw an old woman's face."—p. 240.

A LONG, low house, in a trim little garden, prettily-painted rails running along the foot-path, shrubs of evergreen half-concealing the house from the passers-by—such is my recollection

of my aunt's house. I well remember the last night I spent there, years ago. I was quite a youngster, and I was spending my holidays at my good aunt's—Aunt Sarah we called her.

It was a sharp winter, and the ponds were covered with ice, and, boy-like, my feet were fidgeting to try their powers on the glassy-looking slides; but Aunt Sarah wouldn't hear of it.

"No; Charley must not go on the ice, but come home with aunt."

So aunt carried her way, and I was walked home, grumbling. As the dinner-hour drew near, and with it the prospect of good things, my ill-humour began to thaw, but my pride still battled against giving in. I was in this state of mental conflict when Aunt Sarah came into the dining-room. I felt I wished to revenge myself on her; so I said, "Aunt, how old are you?"

"Not so old as you think, Charley," said she, in a cheery voice, as she put a finishing touch to the fruit and bonbons on the sideboard; "not so old as you think. I don't mind telling you, Charley, for we're such old friends. I shall be thirty if I live till January, Charley."

"Thirty!" I exclaimed—how cruel I was! my mother had told me never to allude to the subject—"why, aunt, I should have thought you sixty, for your hair is quite white—as white as our old clergyman's, and mamma says he's sixty."

My aunt had turned round. She did not speak; her face was very pale, and there was a stony look about her that frightened me. She walked very quietly to the easy chair by the fire, and sat down. I watched her for a little. There was no lamp in the room, but the fire-light played about the hand which shaded her face. Presently I saw bright little drops shining on her cheek. I sprang up; I was in her arms in an instant, pouring out an incoherent speech, in which forgiveness, ice, naughtiness, and bonbons were jumbled together.

We were soon at peace, having had a good cry together, and we sat down to our dinner with sobered cheerfulness, when Mary Anne brought in the lamp. When we had finished the most serious part of the repast, Aunt Sarah proposed, as she always did, that we should draw close to the fire to enjoy our fruit.

"And, Mary Anne," said she, "you can take away the lamp, till we ring for tea. I like the fire-light after dinner, don't you, Charley?"

She took her seat on one of the low easy chairs, and I, on a stool at her feet, began vigorously cracking my nuts, and munching my fruit. After a while, my powers were exhausted, and a few minutes' silence followed. Presently I felt my aunt's fingers twining themselves tremblingly in my hair, and then she said, in a constrained, but soft voice,—

"Would my little Charley like to know how Aunt Sarah's hair became so white?"

I jumped up and kissed her, and said how much I should like to hear all about it, if it would not tease and trouble her to tell it. She put me gently

down, and began, as if half-talking to herself. I wish I could recall her words exactly, they seemed to me so simple, so sweet, at the time.

"Charley may wonder why I was never married. I was to have been married to a very fine fellow. To me he seemed the finest man that ever lived. I am not speaking of his face and figure, Charley, though everybody called Hugh handsome. I am speaking of his disposition. He was so generous and brave; but he had one fault. He would have his own way, and sometimes he was very much put out when I could not let him have it; but then he was so noble-minded, that he would quickly turn round and blame himself.

"It is just about eight years since I was invited down to Glade Park—where my uncle lived—to spend the Christmas, and meet Hugh.

"My uncle was very fond of charades, and he had entrusted Hugh with the task of preparing some, and Hugh had taken great pains to arrange for really amusing pieces. It was settled that I was to take part in them, and my uncle wrote, urging me to come down as soon as possible, that I might become acquainted with my part. I need not say that a more pressing letter than my uncle's reached me at the same time. This was quickly followed by another:—'The arrangements would not be completed in time; my absence threw everything into confusion; I couldn't care much for him, if I did not second his efforts to amuse the company at Glade Park.'

"I could not go just then, Charley. Your mother was very ill, and I was her only relative. It was at the time you were born. I wrote a hurried line to say how ill my sister was, but that she was getting better, and I would leave as soon as I could.

"Your mother was certainly getting better, and I might have left her; but I could not bear to go away and leave her till I felt sure she could manage comfortably without me. So I stayed and answered Hugh's frequent and fiery letters as well as I could. At last, I received a note from Hugh which made me uneasy. He had heard, he said, that 'my sister was quite well enough to spare me; that the day after to-morrow—i.e., the day after I received his letter—was the day fixed for the charade; that if I would set off immediately on receiving the letter, I might be in time to take my part, and show that I cared for him and his credit; but that if I refused to come, he should leave Glade Park at once, convinced that I cared for him less than I did about my sister.'

"Unfortunately, the letter, which ought to have been given to me in the morning, was not given till the afternoon, and then it made me very sad. I was sitting by the fire in your mother's room; your mother was lying on the sofa when the letter was put into my hand. The tears started into my eyes

as I read it. Your mother soon made me tell her all about it, and then insisted on my setting out.

"'Hugh,' said she, 'is not one of those little-minded men, who will take advantage of this concession on your part. So Sarah, dear, do go. There is a train to-night—at least, William can tell us.'

"At that moment your father came in, and your mother told him all about Hugh's letter, and my trouble. Your father stood with his back to the fire thinking. At last, he said—

"'Sarah, I should go. At first I was on the point of advising you not to go; but, on consideration, I think you ought.'

"Then he gave the same reasons your mother had given.

"'Besides,' said he, 'there is no reason for your remaining away. Our darling invalid is getting quite bonnie, and it is a pity to spoil the charade for want of the best character.'

"So it was arranged that I was to go; and packing, bustling, and kissing followed, as a matter of course.

"A sense of relief passed over my heart when I found myself loling back, the solitary occupant of the brightly-lighted first-class compartment, which glided smoothly out of the station. Soon we were rattling over the rails, tearing through the darkness over the country. It was six o'clock when the train started, and we were due at Northburn Junction at 8.30. After lying back, half-dozing, half-thinking, for some time, I was aroused by the shriek of the engine's whistle—that peculiar shriek which begins in the open air, and ends half-stifled by the roar of the train as it enters the tunnel. I looked at my watch: it was nearly eight. We were then entering the Holtmoor tunnel, some twenty miles from my journey's end. I was congratulating myself that so much of my jolting was over, and secretly rejoicing that I should so soon see Hugh, when suddenly I was jerked violently forward, and then almost as violently backward. For a time I was quite confused, and then I heard the distant roar of the train as it passed out of the tunnel, and then a death-like stillness succeeded. The horror of my situation seized me. My carriage had been detached from the rest of the train, and was left standing in the middle of the tunnel. I let down the window and shouted to the next compartment, when I perceived that there was only one light which fell upon the tunnel wall, and that one was from my own compartment; the two other compartments were unoccupied. I was the only passenger in the carriage. I screamed, but the walls sounded heavy, as though leagued together not to carry the news of my imprisonment to the outer world. Strange to say, my only thought at first was how soon I should

probably be released. At length, it dawned upon me that I was in a lonely carriage on a thoroughfare of trains; that probably there was another train coming up on the same line. Probably? Didn't I remember that William said, as we drove along in the carriage, that there was a slow train ten minutes later! And horrible! as the recollection became vivid in my memory, there came down the long tunnel the dreadful shriek. I heard the dull, distant murmur rising into a heavy, lumbering sound. I found that I was muttering some words of prayer; but I can hardly tell you what I said, all was such wild terror in my mind. Charley, be a servant of God when death is distant; it is hard to be a loyal servant of the Master when death is staring you in the face, if you have never been before. The heavy lumbering sound had grown to the strength of thunder—the strength of thunder burst into a deafening roar, and the train dashed past—thank God!—on the other line. To remain longer a prisoner in the carriage seemed to me impossible. Better to brave the dangers of groping my way out of the tunnel than stay where I was. I tried one door; it was locked; the other locked too!

"Perhaps I could squeeze through the window! No; the careful railway company, desirous of preventing mad people from throwing themselves out of the window, had decreed to imprison sane people by placing a bar across it. I tried all my strength to displace this bar, but it was too tightly fixed. I sat down to think. How long I remained thinking I cannot say, but once more I was recalled to consciousness by the terrible shriek—a fierce shriek this time. Again I heard the sullen murmur; again I heard it rise into a heavy, lumbering sound. I grew desperate; I seized the bar of the window. The lumbering sound was like thunder now. With a strength like that of madness I tore the bar from its fastenings. I raised myself in the window; a light flashed in my face, and a man's voice sounded in my ear. What he said I can't remember—I don't think I ever heard, for I had sunk down in a grateful swoon. Something told me that I was rescued. How I came out of the tunnel I don't know from my own recollection: my next remembrance is of waking up in a neat, quiet little room, and seeing beside my bed a comfortable, motherly woman. I heard a faint tinkle; everything was so still and homely around me that the faint tinkle sounded like fairy music. The motherly woman beside me told me that it was the church-bell I heard, for it was Sunday morning. She then drew from me, gently and kindly, my name, and where my friends lived. She sat by my bed-side till the church-bell ceased, and then she said, 'Maybe, miss, you'd like me to read a bit; I do myself when I can't get over to the church yonder.'

"So the good woman took down her big Bible. She chatted a little with the large book upon her knee. She told me that I was in the station-master's house, and that she was the station-master's wife, and that the name of the station was Holtmoor. She then began reading. Very sweet and full of truth sounded those Psalms she read, and more than once her voice deepened into solemn emphasis—'Out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth; that he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity: and deliver his children appointed unto death.' 'He brought down my strength in my journey; and shortened my days. But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.'

"I think, too, I could join heartily in the triumphant thanksgiving. Of the next Psalm she read:—'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction.'

"After this, the good woman—Mrs. Richards was her name—bustled off to attend to her husband's dinner. I heard the sound of the door opening, and then the murmur of the two voices below. Then I heard a man's step on the pavement outside; and then a terrible shriek, which brought back to my mind all the horrors of my danger. Some hours elapsed before I could be quieted—so Mrs. Richards told me afterwards. At length I grew composed, and fell into a tranquil slumber.

"My dear,' said Mrs. Richards, 'the doctor has been to see you while you were asleep. He thinks, my dear, that we may move you to a more comfortable place, and so Mrs. Hawkins—that's the doctor's wife, my dear—is coming round in her carriage to take you to her home. James and me, miss, would gladly take care of you longer; but the doctor—what he says is best, you know; and so, my dear, you'll let me dress you up quite tidy for the doctor's lady—and a dear good lady she is; and she's seen a deal of sorrow, miss. Why, it's not more nor six years since she come here—that was to be the doctor's wife, you know—and now she's got four little darlings lying in the churchyard.'

"All the time Mrs. Richards chatted like this she was employing her busy fingers in preparing me for my departure. My hair had been brushed, and my hands and face softly sponged, and shawls and mufflers wrapped about me. *Presently a ring; and then I was conveyed into a comfortable carriage, and I could see in the dim light a pair of soft, sad, sympathising eyes watching over me.

"I cannot tell you, Charley, of all the kindness I met with at the doctor's house, or how kind they were in giving your father a bed when he came down the next day; but I must tell you why it was that I was removed from the station-master's

house. The shriek which I heard on the Sunday afternoon was the whistle of the midday mail, and my fright alarmed the Richards so much that they determined that I must go away out of the sound of the engines. Then the doctor opened his house, as I have told you.

"We spent Christmas Day at the little town of Holtmoor. It was the first morning that I really got up, and it was on that morning that I discovered the change that had taken place in my appearance. How kind Mrs. Hawkins was! Your father had told them that my hair had been black, and had asked Mrs. Hawkins to tell me of the change. How gently and lovingly she told me! and when I asked, she brought a looking-glass into the room, for they had taken all away; and when I looked into it I saw an old woman's face—at least, I called it so, in my disappointment. I cried a great deal, and thought of Hugh, and what he would think. But Mrs. Hawkins talked so kindly: she said I must not repine at God's will; that there were heavier trials than mine; and I thought of her four babies in the churchyard; and I saw, from the tears that started to her eyes, that she thought of them too; so I gave her a kiss, while she reminded me of the danger I had escaped, and that I ought to be thankful for the life God had spared, instead of repining at the small loss I had suffered; and then she said again, that there were heavier trials in life than this of mine, and that God might call me to prove my patience under these. I looked at her, and saw there was something more for me to hear. Instantly I thought of Hugh. Had anything happened to Hugh? Was he ill? The eager questions came rushing to my mouth. 'Yes, he was well,' Mrs. Hawkins said; 'but didn't I remember that letter?'

"A cloud fell upon my heart. Hugh had carried out his threat—he had left me! But somehow it did not seem so dreadful just at that moment as it did afterwards—as it does even now, Charley, at times. But then I had gone through too much to be able to realise this, my worst trial. Accordingly, when Mrs. Hawkins told me that the doctor and your father were going to church, and that your father was going to preach, but that she would stay at home with me if I felt indisposed to go, I decided at once to go. So we went to the little church. When the General Thanksgiving was read, there was one who desired particularly to render thanks for late mercies vouchsafed to her. Your father preached, Charley: his text was 'Forget not all His benefits,' and I think he remembered me when he chose his text. He told us of the inestimable benefit we commemorated that day. When the organ burst out at the end of the service, it seemed like the echo of my thankful heart, and I dropped my veil to hide my tears.

"There, Charley," said my aunt, assuming her own cheery voice again, "that's my story."

I did not speak at first. I then said, "Holtmoor! Is that the Holtmoor near this?"

"Yes, Charley."

"Have you never seen Hugh again, aunt?"

"Never *seen* him, Charley, but I have heard of him; I heard that he had been ordained, and I read this," said she, pointing her finger to a paragraph in the newspaper—"in to-day's paper."

I looked at the paragraph and read: "The Rev. Hugh Brentwood, M.A., to the Vicarage of Holtmoor."

"Then, aunt," said I, "he's at Holtmoor."

"Yes, Charley. But what is that?"

There was no mistaking, the sound of a horse's hoofs on the hard frosty road; suddenly the clear

ring changed to a grating sound, and then came a heavy fall. We rushed out, and in a few minutes we—I say we, for even I helped in my little way—were bearing into my aunt's hall the senseless form of a man;—"A clergyman," said the cook, pointing to his white tie.

The clergyman was brought into the drawing-room, and a doctor was sent for; but before the doctor came the clergyman had revived. I never heard all about it, but this I can tell, that when I went into the drawing-room to bid aunt good night, she looked very happy, the clergyman looked quite at home, and aunt said to me, "This is the new Vicar of Holtmoor, Charley."

I went home the next day; and about a month afterwards my little schoolfellows and I had a fine feast of wedding-cake.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

BY THE REV. G. A. CHADWICK, M.A.



HE duty of public worship is not one to which the general conscience is quite alive. It is a touching thing to read the passages which tell how, under a dark and comparatively formal system, the Jew's heart still went out after the courts of God, and everything that was in him of heavenly and of good, and all that was prophetic of the true Christian temper, found itself nourished and gratified in the house of the Lord. Touching, because we cannot but feel how far short we come of those passionate longings and breathings of desire, and because we must acknowledge that it would be easy to reverse the cases, and call us the formalists and them the spiritual worshippers. But, indeed, there never was a system sent from above which appealed to anything short of the love and loyalty of the heart; without these the Psalmist would never have kindled with the fire of inspiration, and without these, we, who have the Gospel light, might wisely envy the heathen, to whom less is given, and of whom less will be required.

And yet how few amongst us there are whose "soul longeth and fainteth," and whose "heart and flesh cry out," for the more enlightened, blessed, and Christ-revealing privileges which God now bestows upon his people!

How poor and paltry are the excuses by which men permit themselves to miss the graces of public worship. Doubtless there are some in all our congregations for whose presence we may well thank God, because it involves an effort and a sacrifice which proves both their appreciation of the privilege and the solidity of God's work within them; and there are others of every flock

whose presence would be a violation of his providential command, because it would involve contempt for their own health, and unfit them for performing many an active duty. But it cannot be denied that some absent themselves on such petty grounds as they would never urge for neglecting the invitation of an earthly friend; that a shower keeps many from church whom it would not shut out from a place of idle sport or of worldly profit; and that many are deeply solicitous about their delicate constitutions upon Sunday, who have no fear of venturing, at the latest hours, in the lightest attire, into the warmest and most unwholesome places of amusement, either upon Saturday or Monday.

Now, of course, there is moderation to be observed in all our judgments, and the best man will not find it as afflicting to lose one service out of two in the day, as if, like many Jews, he only saw the Temple at two or three stated seasons all the year, or, like David when his most plaintive hymn was written, he had just resigned the ark into the keeping of a rebel son, and might never look upon it more; but yet we can judge by the sincerity of our feelings now what their depth might be under other circumstances. We know whether, if we were providentially excluded from God's house—stretched, perhaps, upon a bed of languishing and pain, and for months prevented from joining the faithful in fervent prayer or swelling psalm—we should seem to be relieved from an unpleasant duty, or deprived of an inestimable privilege,—whether we should pant for permission to return as the hart panteth for the water-brooks.

Nowhere is the proverb truer than in the sanc-

tuary, that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joys." What diverse emotions are in close contact there! The best commendation which some can bestow upon church praise is that it was good music, and upon prayers, that they were well read and responded to. And yet hearts were there holding intercourse with God; faith was giving evidence to many concerning things not seen; and Christ was being felt as the "fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." There comes the formalist, because he has learned to pass some dreary hours in that formality; and the fashionable man, because religion is kindly patronised in the best circles. And beside them perhaps kneels one upon whose heart the Sun of Righteousness has just arisen, and in whose breast a strange new quiet is lulling passion and fear to sleep. And old believers are sprinkled here and there, who to every promise can set the seal of their experience; who await each new battle with Satan in the confidence of Christian veterans; and feel, while they worship in the beauty of holiness, that their strength is renewed like an eagle's.

So much difference of feeling must bring difference of opinion too; and it is worth while to consider what the benefits of united Christian worship may really be.

1. First benefit: Christian fellowship is kept alive. It is a dreary thing to meet a person who was early left alone; upon whom a father's love and a mother's tenderness had not time to leave their impress, and who has never since known the power of family affection. Thoroughly honest and honourable, friendly, and even sympathising, he may be—yet there is commonly something to betray his want, and distinguish him from his fellows. And so would it be in the Christian life if He, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, did not sometimes gather its scattered members into groups, and unite them for a common purpose. Cold and ungenial would we be, wrapped in our own spiritual concerns as the world in its own temporal affairs; forgetting that our fellow-men had souls to be saved, enemies to be vanquished, and a heaven to gain; forgetting the great lesson that no temptation hath befallen us but such as is natural to man; making excuses for our shortcomings out of our rare and peculiar trials and afflictions, distrusting perhaps the readiness or power of grace to repel our special adversaries. Is it nothing to be reminded weekly that others are fighting precisely the same fight—to hear them appealing to Jesus for support and guidance—to discover among their trials and afflictions some which we could alleviate or remove? Think you that no feeling of Christian brotherhood is nursed in the open heart by joining the body of Christ's people in prayer and praise,

and that our public services shed no light upon, and add no emphasis to, the lesson taught in the first word of our Lord's Prayer, "Our Father"—not mine alone? As in the body of Christ, as in the eye of God, as in the dust of death, so here also, "the rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all."

2. This leads us almost imperceptibly to the second benefit: The assemblies of the Church are *a witness to the truth*. One great difficulty which men feel in religion is the air of *unreality* that unbelief has imparted to it. And if we require to image out for ourselves even material things, if we value—oh, how dearly!—the photograph or the tress of a departed friend—if flags, and trophies, and monuments help us to comprehend the greatness of our country, surely religion, which is being pushed out of our minds by the hostility of Satan and the pre-occupations of busy life, must be greatly helped by having its claim to attention brought under our very eyes. Now this is what the congregations do; they compel men to look at the armies of Christ; they say, Here are we, confessing in word and deed that there *is* a Christ, a life to come, a new birth, and an object in time that reaches beyond itself. At a moment when infidelity is insidious almost beyond example, when society and the press are both full of a subtle and dangerous scepticism, surely it is a gain to demonstrate by the steady, uninterrupted assemblies of the Church that, after all, the bad impression is so ridiculously weak as not to have affected in the slightest the hold of Christ's blessed truths upon the multitude. Now, let us remember that our wilful or frivolous absence does all it can to weaken this grand practical demonstration.

3. But this is not all: the congregation is a powerful witness to the reality, the vitality, the spirituality of God's work; for though you cannot point to this man or that, and say, "He is in earnest, *his* heart is in the service," yet you must know sometimes that God's Spirit is at work upon the mass. You do feel that it heaves with some unearthly agitation; you are forced to acknowledge that some power, ay, sacred and sanctifying power, is present. You are convinced of all, you are judged of all, and thus are the secrets of your heart made manifest, and falling down, you will worship God, and report that God is with us for a truth.

Oh, for more of that grandest and best of evidences, the demonstration of the Spirit and of power! Is there no reader who will cry day and night unto the Father to revive the drooping Church, to send his breath upon the dry bones?

4. But far above all these minor considerations towers the grand argument that God—that Christ is there! "What," says the scoffing sceptic,

"more there than elsewhere—than where the waters sing his praises, and the trees and the hills point up to his abode?"

'Go thou into the house of prayer,
I to the woodlands will repair,
And seek the God of Nature there.'"

But we answer, "Yes, he is more truly here." True that he fills all places, but yet he has a special abode in heaven, and regions of sweet resort on earth. Hooker somewhere remarks that "Adam, even during the space of his short continuance in Paradise, had where to present himself before the Lord." The Jews in the wilderness, wandering daily to a new resting-place, bore with them constantly the place where the Lord revealed himself. Christ himself declared that "the temple sanctifieth the gold," and promised that where two or three were gathered together in his name, there would he be in the midst of them." For although God is equally present with the vilest blasphemer and the holy saint, he is present in diverse attributes and in a very different way. And although Jesus is with his people always, yet is he pleased to reveal himself most benignantly where they assemble expressly to implore his favour, to confess his Lordship, to join hands in the Brotherhood which he established, and to catch that smile from God in his holy temple which is their exceeding great reward.

It is ill for us if we never felt it.

Did you never go about in sullen gloominess, conscious that you had sinned, that your sin had shut you out from privilege and blessedness, and even striving in some poor way to return and say, "Father, I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," but yet unable to accept the fulness and the freedom of God's pardon and love until, in his own holy place, the sufficiency of Jesus shone upon your emancipated heart, and the snare broke, and you escaped?

Did you never feel the darkness of some perplexity—some speculative difficulty or entanglement of doctrine—hang like a low, thick mist upon your spirit, till every blade and flower in the garden of the soul was chilled and wet as with tears: and going about, perhaps, for days, you sought relief and found it not, until, like David, you "went into the house of God; then understood" you what you asked, or else rose into a higher atmosphere, and saw the clouds beneath your feet?

Did you never find out that mortal affection at the best can only point up, spire-like and gracious, to something holier, purer, and more Divine than even human love or human friendship at their holiest, and seek for that "something"—yea, upon your knees—in vain or half in vain, and only obtain the largeness of the gift, the closeness

of the companionship, where Christ loves best to meet his people, and to prove to them by infallible signs that "it is he himself?"

And ah, my brother, did you never shudder at a foul thought that could not be shaken off, but clung to you as if it would defile you against your will; never shrink, as it were, from the polluting breath of some continuing, obstinate, personal tempter; never find that at the best you could but refuse to *yield*, but had not power to speak the decisive words of mastery, "Get thee behind me, Satan," that would shake off the fiend completely; and, when other means had only given *relief*, obtain deliverance and liberty once more, when you went with the multitude that kept holy day?

Surely there is a special serenity, refreshment, and repose,—a peculiar privilege, a clearness of vision, a dying away of the earthquake and the fire, and a coming of the still small voice; nay, rather a presence of Jesus in the midst, saying, "Peace be unto you;" a conscious mastery of hindrances and access to the throne in prayer; an exultant elevation and acceptance in thanksgiving that are almost peculiar to God's house, that are, doubtless, granted, in other and easier ordinances, to the sick, the aged, and the providentially detained, but by us, who are permitted the use of public worship, are commonly and chiefly to be drawn from these wells of salvation.

See, then, how much we lose when we come hither as to a mere duty which must be gone through, cold, unexpectant, prayerless, faithless, apathetic. Oh, let the Spirit of supplication always come with us to the house of prayer; let us remember the promises whereon He hath made us to trust, and act in the spirit of that fine old couplet—

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring."

Let us be reverend and solemn, keeping our foot when we go to the house of God, and more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil. And if God's house be really our pleasure, if we find any advantage in keeping his commands upon this subject, we will no longer neglect week-day services so entirely as many nominal Christians do, nor content ourselves with the smallest attendance which decency and orthodoxy permit. We will hail these additional services as really being what we often call them, additional "means of grace," little palm islands in the desert of our working life, where we may quench our thirst, and rest under the shade, and go forward refreshed and re-invigorated on our journey to that place whose inhabitants form eternally one "general assembly and church of the first-born," and "the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it."

WINTER VIOLETS.

WHEN the virgin snow is flinging
 Its crown over Nature's head;
 When the birds have left off singing,
 And the desolate earth seems dead;
 When for winter and all its losses
 The leafless branches weep,
 From the heart of the tender mosses
 The blue-eyed violets creep.

When the hill-sides, bleak and lonely,
 And the valley is wrapt in mist;
 When roses are dead, and only
 Red berries with Life are kist;
 When nothing seems left to long for,
 And nobody cares to sing,
 We catch one strain of a song, for
 The violets whisper Spring!

When dreaming of past and present,
 To-day, and never again,
 The hours that were sad and pleasant,
 The cup of pleasure and pain;
 When friendship's snows have drifted,
 And sweet love seems to die,
 A weight from our hearts is lifted,
 For there the violets lie.

Two maidens under the trees, love—
 Two hearts and never a sigh—
 Where safely hid from the breeze, love,
 We wandered—you and I;
 No shadows of pain or loss, love,
 Through the gold of their tresses creep;
 And so from the heart of the moss, love,
 The blue-eyed violets creep.

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

ON NAMING OUR CHILDREN.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BARKER, M.A.

WHAT name to give the baby has often been a serious question in the family council. If the child happens to be the tenth or the dozenth, the difficulty is none the less. I once asked the father of a large family how he found names for them all. "Names, sir," he replied, "the puzzle with me is to find bread for them." The old proverb that "where God sends mouths, he sends bread to fill them," does not always bring consolation and hope. A story is told of two men, the one rich and the other poor, talking together on this very subject. The poor man, having many children, was complaining of hard times and scanty fare. To comfort him, his wealthy neighbour reminded him of this proverb. "True, sir," said Paterfamilias, "only with this difference, that God has sent me the mouths and you the bread."

The question still remains, "What are we to call the baby?" In some households the matter is referred to the father for decision. In others, the mother has this privilege. In others, again, the lads are named by one parent, the girls by the other. Sometimes the elder children are consulted, or the sponsors, or a rich relation, or some valued friends; so that frequently much time is spent, many opinions given, before the decision is come to. Nor is that decision always the best. People's tastes differ so much with regard to names. "Mary" is music in some ears; its sweetness is wasted on others. To me, "Mary" is a perfect name. It is never out of place. It becomes a queen as much as a waiting-maid.

Parents can never be wrong in having one Mary in the family where there are girls. She will never be ashamed of it. It will never cause a start or a shiver when mentioned, as Jezebel, or Tabitha, or Deborah might. Only, if your daughter is to be christened "Mary," do not destroy its grace and beauty and music by adding to it "Ann."

But what about the boys? Are there no names for them equal to Mary, and Margaret, and Sarah, and Elizabeth? Certainly there are, but they are not Jonathan, or Isaac, or Timothy, or Gabriel. These are all very good and proper names in the places where we find them; but out of the Bible they always seem inappropriate. I would be very careful and sparing in the use of Scripture names. Some few of them are ever in season—such as John, James, Thomas, Samuel; but most of them are undesirable as modern names. Why it is so, we cannot easily say. Why Moses, Abraham, Job, Solomon, Titus, should seem incongruous and harsh, I cannot tell; but most people will admit that their adoption now is somewhat objectionable. To call out to a little dirty urchin playing in the streets, "Aaron, you rascal," or, "Come hither, Jacob," is not at all complimentary to the patriarchs. Let parents, then, consider before they determine upon a Bible name. Your children are entirely in your hands: they are unconscious of what is passing. Their future may, in measure, be affected by the names you give them. Do not expose them to ridicule and shame by singularity in this matter.

I once knew a family in which almost every



(Drawn by EDITH DUNK.)

"We catch one strain of a song, for
The violets whisper, Spring!"—p. 344.

member had a Scriptural name. The fact made the family peculiar. Whenever a fresh baby saw the light, the father, who took the business of nomenclature entirely into his own hands, invariably opened the large family Bible, and, beginning at Genesis, he gravely went through the other books, until he made up his mind what name to choose. The result of these sundry searchings was that the lads, poor fellows, had inflicted upon them the names of Ezra, Jehoshaphat, Lot, Titus, and Lazarus. The last-named had the heaviest burden to bear; and it is to his credit to say that he bore it with much resignation.

The late Rev. Dr. Winter Hamilton used to tell a story of name-giving, which I will relate. He was spending a Sunday in Lancashire, and during the day he was called upon to baptise a sick child at its parents' home. Coming to the house, Dr. Hamilton asked "if Mr. So-and-so lived there?" A man in his shirt-sleeves, workman-like, replied that he did. On Dr. H. saying that he had come to christen the baby, the man went to the stairs-foot and called out, "Betty, here's th' felly come to do th' barn." Betty at once descends with the "barn" and the basin, and the ceremony is proceeded with as far as the part where the name has to be given. On asking for the name, the parents said, "they'd never thought o' that." Would the parson mention some name? Dr. H. suggested Joseph, Benjamin. "Benjamin—that'll do gradely." So the child was named Benjamin, and the minister departed. Scarcely had he got away from the door, when the father with his hair flying in the wind, ran down the street, crying out, "A say, maister, hoo's a wench! hoo's a wench!"—which words, being interpreted, mean, that the child was a girl. The dilemma was escaped from by adding "a" to Benjamin.

But we have not yet named this child over whom the supposed consultation was being held. Have you already a *John*? If not, decide for "John." It never grows old. It suits either baby or grandfather, peasant or peer. I would, however, make one exception to this choice. Provided your family name be "Smith" (a very excellent surname, but not the most uncommon), do not have a "John." "John Smith" is a calamity from which you should studiously deliver your child. Call him thus, he will certainly be lost; he will never receive his letters; if his house should catch fire the engines are sure to go to the wrong John Smith's. It will take him double the time and effort to rise into fame that it would require if he were baptised "Albert" or "Sydney." Albert Smith and Sydney Smith are already great names. All honour to these two men for having cast such a lustre on the name. I am almost

tempted to advise that other numerous family yclept Jones to beware of "John." People should be the more careful in this business of name-giving because, while the surname can be changed, the Christian name cannot. Hence Nicholas Bugg may become a Howard, but he must retain the "Nicholas;" and Simeon Scroggs may aspire to be called Percival, or Granville, but "Simeon" is a fixture, and it spoils the nobility of the new adoption.

If I may venture to offer a few suggestions on this topic, I would say—

1. Do not imitate the *Americans* in their selection of Christian names.

The American people are not to be admired and copied in *everything* they say and do. I would avoid their love of boasting. And if the following extract from one of their newspapers speaks the truth, their taste in names is peculiar:—

We have a family in Detroit whose sons are named *One Stickney, Two Stickney, Three Stickney*; and the daughters *First, Second, and Third Stickney*. The three elder children of another family were called "Joseph," "And," "Another;" and it is proposed to name the rest, if any appear, "Also," "Moreover," "Nevertheless," and "Notwithstanding." Another family actually baptised their child "Finis," thinking it was to be the last, but having subsequently a daughter and two sons, they were christened "Addenda," "Appendix," and "Supplement." Could absurdity and bad taste go further? But it is in keeping with their street-nomenclature—*One Street, Two Street, Tenth Avenue, &c.*; and that of their villages, called "Social Circle," "Number One," "Why Not," "Oatmeal," "Half Moon," "Henpeck," "Queer Street," &c. Such a ridiculous selection of names has only to be mentioned to be avoided.

2. Do not give *too many* Christian names.

Our forefathers were simple enough to be content with but one Christian name. It is counted rather vulgar and plebeian now to sign one's self plain "John Evans," or "Jeseeph Brown." If we could but make it spread out into "Joseph William Alexander Brown," and "John Edward Marmaduke Evans," what greatness the swelling words would betoken! The Princess Royal is called "Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa," and one of her royal brothers "Arthur William Patrick Albert." Hence many *other* children, *not* of princely blood, and not living in palaces, nor yet in houses, but in cabins and slums, are running about, all dirty and wild, bearing in their obscurity and filth the regal names of "Albert Edward," "George Frederick," "Alice Maud Mary," "Alexandra Sophia," and "Beatrice Isabel Julia Maria."

Bad as we are, we are not yet as bad as the Spanish and Portuguese in their love of multiplicity of names. They do not hesitate to give their princes and princesses some fifteen to twenty names!

Now, do not try to crowd into one child's name all the names of your family from the Conquest. One evil of it is, that it takes so long to write it and occupies so much space. A late member of the Irish bar was called, facetiously, "The Alphabet So-and-so," because he had so many of the twenty-six letters attached to his name.

Two good names as Christian names are quite enough; and it is a good custom to appropriate as the second the maiden name of the mother, or the name of some valued member of the family in a former generation.

3. Do not be too fond of borrowing the names of great men.

I would discourage the use of celebrated names for the same reasons as I would avoid the indiscriminate use of Bible names. Your child is not necessarily great because he bears the name of an illustrious man. He may be christened John Homer Smith, and yet be a curer of bad legs, as a certain Homer Somebody once was. *Martin Luther* Jones may be a Papist and a coward. Some people are fond of perpetuating the *Wesley* family in their sons' names. If we only had the *men*, John and Charles Wesley, as well as their names, it might be better for the religion of our land. It is, per-

haps, a great compliment to the Iron Duke that he has been reproduced hundreds of times in name in our English homes. Arthur Wellesley Dobbs, and Arthur Wellesley Chubb, are by no means uncommon. But where is the aquiline nose and the unparalleled general? Garibaldi has been the rage of late. Popular men are thus honoured, and small people are thus pleased! Let your children make their names great, for it is very improbable that their names will make them great.

There are many absurd stories told in connection with this subject of naming children, many of them are too ridiculous to be true. One is, that once at a baptism, when the name was required, and "Lucy, sir," was said in reply, only with a lisp, which made it sound like "Lucifer," the minister said, "Lucifer! Why, that will never do; I will call him John!" Another clergyman is known to have named twins "Gog and Magog." This is no worse than "Salvation," "Selah," and "God so loved the World." All such irreverence is simply profane.

Enough has been said to show that the subject is full of interest and importance, and that there is a great deal in a name.

DEEPDALE VICARAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN."

CHAPTER LXV.

THE VICAR'S MONEY.

BY degrees, the whole story was revealed. Had that revelation come sooner, better would it have been for the populace of Deepdale. They would not then, for six whole months, have been the persecutors of Clara Melrose.

The true facts of the case were these:—

Reginald Chauncey was, as usual, involved in difficulties of a pecuniary nature. His difficulties, indeed, had become so pressing that he knew not where to look for relief. While revolving in his mind what he should do to escape them, it occurred to him that he had a friend in the neighbourhood of Deepdale, who might be prevailed upon to assist him. This friend was steward to the Marquis of Crutchley.

Reginald Chauncey, who was driven to actual extremities by the importunities of his creditors, resolved to make a purposed journey, in order to solicit help from his friend. He did so, but he failed to meet with that ready response for which he had hoped. The steward declared himself unable to meet the demands of the case. "He had no money," that was his expression; and he added, immediately after, the ill-omened words—

"I have just paid the rent-charge to the Vicar of

Deepdale. You might try and borrow something of him."

Reginald Chauncey had not, at this time, the slightest intention to commit a crime. Such an idea had never occurred to him. He simply had the feelings of a man in desperate circumstances; and, with these feelings, he turned his steps towards the vicarage.

The generosity of Mr. Melrose was proverbial in that part of the country. His hand and heart were ever open. Far beyond his means did he extend his charities—an appeal to his tender mercies was rarely made in vain. These particulars respecting him were known to Reginald Chauncey, and encouraged him to make the application as suggested by his friend.

When he reached the vicarage, his knocks and rings at the door met with no attention. No one came. He was eager to obtain the interview; most unwilling to go away without it. Cautiously, but still bent on finding some one, he tried to open the door. The door yielded to his touch. He opened it and entered. Still he had no sinister design; no thought of doing harm to any human being. His motive was to find some one who should give him information touching the vicar's whereabouts. Unfortunately, he could find no one. He wandered from room to room, each one being apparently deserted. At length he found himself in the study.

The study was a small room, one side of which was taken up with an old-fashioned cabinet or bureau, a kind of heirloom in the family.

"I could never account for it,"—this was his own language—"but from the first moment, an irresistible desire seized upon me to open that bureau. Frank, it is true as I am a living man! I was impelled towards it! It flashed into my mind that it contained money. Money was the thing I thirsted for; for want of which I should be a ruined man! My credit gone, my position lost, my very name blotted out. Yes: I was certain that it contained money! A kind of trembling seized upon me; my eyes looked wild; I could see them in a mirror that hung over the fireplace. They had a greedy wolfish look that almost frightened me. I stepped towards the cabinet. A cold perspiration broke out upon my forehead. I tried to open it; it was locked of course! But I had keys in my pocket that could overcome almost any obstacle of that nature. I felt for them. All this time, I was like a man suspended from the mast of a vessel. I was giddy, almost faint with excitement and with terror; for it became clearer to me every minute, the thing I was going to do. It was to steal the old vicar's money! I did not intend to take it all; a tithe of it would save me from immediate ruin. I never contemplated the idea of taking the whole. But when my key had fitted the lock, when I had opened the cabinet, and my hand had grasped a small bag placed therein, then I lost all reason, all self-possession. I clutched it! I had it! I held it! Now nothing would satisfy me, unless I obtained possession of it all. I could feel the gold. I did not stay to look; such a terror laid hold upon me. But when I raised my head, and caught a glimpse in the mirror, I hardly knew myself. What a haggard, guilty wretch I looked! There was nothing for it but to fly. I secreted the bag about my person; and prepared to go. I dared not return through the house, lest I should be detected. I raised the window and escaped. Frank, I knew I was a villain. Believe me, that money has been a curse. Before the week was over, I had gambled away every farthing. You need not speak to me again. You need not breathe the air I breathe. I will go, Frank; only do not give your own father up to justice!"

He had finished the recital. Frank had listened, his face white and stern, his brow knit as with intolerable pain.

Reginald Chauncey rose; so did his son.

"You will not give me up Frank, for the sake of your mother!"

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE CONFESSION DULY WITNESSED.

REGINALD CHAUNCEY was a coward. Such men always are. He had made the revelation on the impulse of the moment, and had made it to his son! In so intimate a relation of life, a confession of such a serious nature might be supposed to carry with it the hope of inviolable secrecy. He had acted on the supposition.

Frank would not, as a matter of course, betray his father. But when he beheld Frank's countenance—when he read its expression of indignation and abhorrence—he felt afraid of what he had done. Then, with all the cowardice of a guilty conscience, he trembled.

"You will not betray me," repeated he, in accents of alarm, "for the sake of your mother!"

To hear that revered name in those lips was almost more than Frank could bear. His immediate impulse was to hurry from the spot, to wander he cared not whither. But it could not be; the bearings of the case forbade it. He could not let the innocent stand any longer in the place of the guilty. He would have to tell the little world at Deepdale who it was that had taken the old vicar's money. He would have to vindicate, once and for ever, the character of Clara Melrose.

To do this effectually, he must have a written confession, duly signed and attested, of his father's guilt. He knew how to obtain such a confession. He would do it. Not by a useless appeal to his father's honour, or sense of manliness, but by rousing his fears. On such a condition only, would he allow him to take his departure.

It was evident that Reginald Chauncey was alarmed. His jocund air had given place to an expression of craven terror. But when Frank told him what he had to do, he revived. He had feared a worse alternative than having his name branded with infamy: he had feared a prison!

Frank told him what he was required to write. A clear and circumstantial account of the robbery committed at Deepdale Vicarage.

"There, Frank—that is what you want, I suppose."

He spoke in his usual jocular tone. His face was as gay and self-possessed as ever. It was incredible how soon Reginald Chauncey could be himself again.

"Now, I will spare your feelings," continued he, ringing the bell. "I will not require of you to witness the signature I am about to affix to this paper. It might be too much for your sensibilities."

Frank's amazement was so great that he hardly noticed the sneer. He was but too well accustomed to his father's taunts. What, however, could Reginald Chauncey be about to do?—to do, in this moment of imminent peril and embarrassment?

Frank was standing, with the paper in his hand, when the landlord entered. He had evidently expected a summons; for he knew that his guest was about to depart that morning, and had "kept in the way," as he informed his wife, "in order to see the gentleman off."

"Well, my good friend," said Reginald Chauncey, addressing him in a tone of perfect good humour, "you and I have a little business to settle this morning. Pray have you brought your account?"

The landlord, all bows and smiles, produced it. In fact, he had it ready in his pocket. He rubbed his hands complacently, while Reginald looked over the long list of items, and said he hoped he had succeeded in making all things comfortable.

"Capital, my good friend!" replied Reginald. "Here is your money." And with the air of a man whose resources are unlimited, he drew out his purse, full of gold, and laid it on the table.

The landlord's eye sparkled.

"Wait a minute, my friend," said Reginald Chauncey, "I have a little matter here, in which you can greatly oblige me. It is to witness my signature. Mr. Chauncey, will you be kind enough to hand me the document?"

Frank, perfectly astounded at his father's coolness, did so.

"It is a little affair of business—a mere matter of money. I will not trouble you to go into it," said Reginald Chauncey, commencing to flourish his signature at the bottom.

When he had finished, the landlord took up the pen and wrote his name where he was desired. He had not so much as attempted to glance at the contents of the paper. Had he been disposed to read it, it would have been impossible. The gay, jewelled hand of Reginald Chauncey, as if by accident, concealed the fatal words from his view. He appeared simply to be showing the landlord where to sign.

While the landlord was settling his bill, with a profusion of polite speeches, and expressions of regret at parting with his guest, Reginald had folded up the paper. Then he placed it in an envelope, tinted and perfumed as usual, and fastened it down. With the same easy gesture as before, he handed the envelope to Frank.

"You must do as you please, Frank. See, there is my horse. Good-bye to you."

"Good-bye," said Frank, mechanically.

"Won't you shake hands?" and the gay, jewelled fingers of Reginald Chauncey were held out, in the most condescending manner.

Frank touched them for a moment. This man was his father, and they might never meet again!

Frank, left alone, wandered away into the fields, not caring, for the moment, what might become of him. Sometimes, he thought he would flee the country. Sometimes, he thought he would bury himself in the heart of London. Anywhere, so he might escape from the prying eyes of the world. He wandered till he was spent and weary. Indeed, the sun was sinking behind the hills, ere he recovered his self-possession—ere the first sharp agony had subsided.

For the time, he was like a man beside himself. What could he do? Could he keep silence, and allow the innocent to suffer for the guilty? No! Honour and humanity alike forbade it. But if he spoke,—if he told the little world at Deepdale who the culprit really was, should he not brand with infamy his own father?

Frank groaned bitterly at the thought. He had sat down on a mossy bank, in the retired spot to which he had wandered. A tremor seized him, as the idea, in all its hideousness, became apparent to him. He sat, his hands tightly pressed to his forehead.

His father!

Did he not remember her, who, on her death-bed,

had charged him to stand by and to screen her husband from disgrace?

"Ah!" thought Frank, tears bursting forth as the memory of his mother came back, with all its vividness, "thank God, she is at rest; thank God, this cup was spared her!"

Then he began to reflect, more calmly, for tears had eased his tortured brain, he began to reflect, how he could reconcile these two jarring ends. How he could vindicate Clara Melrose, and yet screen his father.

The mere bald fact of the confession having been made to him, by the sick man at the inn, must come out, and that immediately. Not a single day would he allow the ban to rest on the head of the widow. But need that guilty person be Reginald Chauncey? Need Frank disclose who he was? The stranger had given no name. He had preserved a strict incognito. Surely it was not required that his own son should penetrate and disclose the mystery! Would it not be unnatural, unfilial, to do so?

What would happen if Justice, once set upon the track, found her victim, was another matter. If the disgrace must come, let it. Frank would calmly abide the consequences. But need he, with his own finger, point out his father?

Yet there was the confession! The confession, signed by Reginald Chauncey's own hand. What was Frank to do with that?

Shuddering, he drew the envelope, tinted and perfumed as it was, from his pocket,—the envelope which contained the declaration of his father's guilt!

He opened and read it. It was written clearly, and without the least appearance of alarm or hesitation. Every word stood out, with horrible distinctness, before the eyes of Frank. All at once, he uttered a strange cry, and started up, the paper in his hand, and the tinted envelope lying at his feet.

His father might well go off with that easy jocund air. He, at least, had known how to meet the emergency. Frank might weep and rend his very heart: the lordly Reginald would not so much as let his equanimity be ruffled.

He had written the confession, it is true; but the name he had put to it was not his own. It was that of an individual invented for the occasion.

The paper was signed, "Richard Canning."

Frank stood, with the paper in his hand, as if, at first, he could hardly realise the fact. Yet, after all, he had his own simplicity to blame.

Would the man of varied wit and devices—the man of the world—who had experience of every possible vicissitude and emergency,—with whom truth was a thing to jeer at, and honour an empty name—would he have been likely to sign his own destruction?

Frank's simple nature and honest dealing were sure to be outwitted in the contest with Reginald Chauncey! Yet it must be confessed, that this discovery, though it made a fresh sense of shame tingle in his cheek, was a relief. His great object, the freedom of Clara Melrose from suspicion, might perhaps be accomplished without so painful an alternative. Let the confession go forth as it was. It would not be the first time that a criminal has given

the world the lie. Let the world, if it chose, find out the fraud.

"Surely," groaned Frank, in his anguish, "it cannot be required of me to tear aside the veil. Enough, if I do justice to the innocent;—enough, if through my instrumentality, the widow can again lift up her head in Deepdale."

As he thought thus, what he had to do became clearer to him. At once, he would reveal the matter to the enemies of Clara Melrose; at once, he would hand them the confession; and then he would wait!

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE COUNTESS BAFFLED.

HIS road home lay by the Manor. He could not choose but look up at it. It was the fond look with which one regards a pleasant thing ere it departs from us for ever.

The Manor did not present that deserted appearance which it had done of late. The blinds were drawn up. It seemed as if the family had returned.

Such a thing was not impossible, considering the sudden and unexpected movements of the countess. Besides, Phil might have sent for her.

If so, Lucy had returned. Lucy, whom he so dearly loved—from whom he must be severed for ever!

He was hurrying by, his face averted, when some one called him by name. It was the footman, with the familiar request—

"If you please, Mr. Chauncey, my lady is wishing to speak to you."

Frank stopped. He had no other alternative. His mind was so full of the sense of disgrace, that it occurred to him the countess might have heard of it. He was in a state to imagine improbable and impossible things.

In the hall of the Manor another footman, equally resplendent in lace and gold, awaited him. His office was to conduct Mr. Chauncey to the presence of the countess.

It was evident she had not heard, for she came forward to meet the young man with the utmost cordiality.

"Well, Mr. Chauncey, so you see we have got home again."

Frank, whose spirits could not on the instant be rallied, muttered something about not having expected them back again so soon.

The countess smiled benignantly upon him.

"You see, Mr. Chauncey, events happen for which one is hardly prepared. I came home on account of Lucy."

"Indeed," said Frank, somewhat sadly.

"You will be glad to know," continued the countess—"you will be glad to know that Lady Lucy is a great deal better."

Frank was glad.

"The sea-air has set her up wonderfully. You never saw anything like it in your life," said her ladyship, joyfully. "Now, do sit down, Mr. Chauncey."

This was the countess's usual mode of proceeding when she meant to be confidential.

"Mr. Chauncey," said the countess, her quick eye noting his abstraction, "are you attending to me? I want to tell you something."

Frank felt ashamed of the rebuke. He was all attention.

"After what has passed," said the countess, hesitating, and looking down, "you will not be surprised to hear that—the engagement between Lady Lucy and Sir Geoffrey Willet has been broken off."

Frank was not surprised in the least—for the simple reason that he knew it before.

"Of course," said the countess, in an apologetic tone, and still looking down, "I could not be expected to know how strongly the poor child felt on the subject, or else—I would not—have insisted upon it," added she, after a pause.

It was evident she wished to screen her conduct somewhat in the eyes of Frank. At another time, this phase in the conduct of the imperial woman, who ruled Deepdale, might have been interesting and complimentary; but now, alas! Frank's thoughts were too much engrossed with his own bitter wee to receive the confidence with the consideration it deserved.

"I wish again to thank you, Mr. Chauncey for your attention to my daughter," said she, in a tone of cordial kindness. "I shall ever think that Lucy owes her life to you."

Frank bowed, in reply to this speech.

"It is of my daughter I wish to speak," said the countess, softly.

Frank made no reply, though the countess paused, as though expecting that he should do so. During the brief interval of silence, exceeding bitter were the memories that came crowding into the young man's mind. But yesterday, how brightly shone the sun of his prosperity! how tenderly he had been dwelling on the thought of Lucy's return! How joyful had seemed his life! Now, alas! this tempest had up-riven all things.

Lucy he might never see again! For though—and the reflection passed swiftly through his brain—though he might screen his father, he could by no means escape himself. The innocent *must* suffer for the guilty. The earliest dawn of love must be extinguished between himself and Lucy. Was not his name disgraced? was he not the son of a criminal?

"She shall never know," thought Frank, "the reason why I fled from her—and flee I will—ay, miles and miles away from Deepdale!"

The countess, having vainly paused for a reply, continued her speech. Not, however, until she had scanned Frank's face narrowly. It was a face just then of utter and blank despair.

When she had scanned it, she smiled. "I can soon settle him," thought she.

"Mr. Chauncey, I think you take somewhat of an interest in my daughter."

She said it still softly. Indeed, her manners were

subdued, almost tender. He had never seen her in this mood before.

She thought she had the clue to Frank's despondency. She thought he was afraid of not obtaining her consent to become the lover of Lucy. And it was a bold thing, the countess reflected—very bold indeed—for a young man of no position, or wealth, or name—(the Chaunceys were an extinct race, as far as their glory went)—for him to seek to ally himself with the Landons! At first the countess had recoiled from the idea, but sundry considerations had reconciled her to it.

To begin with, Frank had a share of manly beauty and accomplishments that had been rather dazzling to the countess. He was a young man of *parts*, as she boasted to the select circle of her acquaintance. He had good blood in his veins, though the world might be oblivious of the fact. And—which consideration did more honour to her heart—Frank had been instrumental in rescuing her daughter from an early grave. Instrumental, in fact, in undoing the mischief *she* had done, and in saving her from undying remorse.

Yes, she was eternally indebted to Frank! Then Lucy loved him; Lucy, who had been so difficult to deal with—so unlike the rest of her race—would be thus happily disposed of. The countess was sadly haunted by the dread lest Lucy should never marry at all. Lucy would be disposed of. The girl's fortune was ample, and she and her husband might occupy as brilliant a position as any young married people in the county.

"He can give up his doctoring, and turn gentleman," she had thought to herself.

When, however, in spite of her soft speaking, Frank stood, pale, and rigid, and silent, she began to feel uneasy. It was strange that her delicate hints should be disregarded—hints, one would think, that a lover might have caught up with eagerness. It is true, that at the conclusion of her last speech, a gleam shot from Frank's eye, a quick, passionate gleam, that rested for a moment on the face of the Big Countess. But it soon changed to one of despair, or, as it might have been interpreted, blank indifference.

What was she to think? how was she to proceed? For once the countess felt baffled.

Yet the old imperious will began to assert itself. Lady Landon was not to be trifled with. She was not intending to be the confidante of a love affair which had no existence, save in Lucy's romantic brain. No, indeed! She would find out the truth of the matter then and there.

"Mr. Chauncey," said she, coming close up to him, and taking his hands in her vast grasp, "am I right in my conjecture—is it not you who love my daughter?"

The kindness of her tone, the genial expression of her face, admitted of no doubt, no hesitation. Swift as lightning passed through the young man's mind the thing he had lost—the happiness of his whole life!

He could not bear it. It half maddened him. He tore his hands from the countess's grasp, and staggered towards the door. To attempt to explain, even to speak, was impossible; and with the wail of his dying hopes ringing in his ears, he fled away from Deepdale Manor!

(To be continued.)

THE WOODPECKER.



IT is not only in mankind that we find differences of rank and occupation. Look at the birds of heaven—they also are divided into rich and poor, princes and beggars, working people and proud nobles. The peacock certainly thinks himself the king, or at least a prince of birds, as, erect and proud, he walks about with outspread tail, and seems to call on every one to admire his splendour. The cock is a knightly warrior, with shield and spurs; and when, seated on the top of a wall, he flaps his wings and crows, it is a challenge to the other inhabitants of the poultry yard to meet him in single combat. The hawks and their tribe are bold hunters; the stork, crane, and heron divide the fishing; larks, nightingales, and finches are sweet musicians; Miss Magpie, is a dancing-mistress, the swallows are the masons, and the woodpeckers are the carpenters: of whom I am going to tell you something.

There are four brothers in the family of the woodpeckers; the eldest of them wears a black coat and red cap; the second is dressed in green, and both

these are very superior in appearance to the other two, who wear variegated jackets, and who belong to the class of journeymen workers. The woodpecker lives frugally and industriously, as is suitable for a poor carpenter and woodcutter. He rises early to begin his day's work, which consists in going from tree to tree, and picking out from the bark and wood earwigs, beetles, worms, and other insects which feed upon the sap of the tree, causing it to decay and die. When the woodpecker sees a tree which seems wanting in vigour, he flies to it, and perching on the stem with his strong feet (the toes of which are turned to the back and front in alternate couples, and armed with sharp claws), he knocks with his beak, as if asking admission.

The tree, however, has no door to open for him; but whispers, "If you want to get in, friend, you must find a way for yourself." The woodpecker does not wait to be told a second time, but commences to pick, hack, and bore till a heap of splinters lies on the ground. Ah! what a slaughter of the insects who infest the tree! With his sharp tongue, which serves him for both knife and fork, he commences to dine

